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Perestroika and the politics of the revolutionary left in Latin America.

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PERESTROIKA AND THE POLITICS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT IN LATIN AMERICA

A Dissertation Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

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THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT IN LATIN AMERICA

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The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the impact of Soviet *perestroika* and foreign policy "new thinking" on the Revolutionary Left in Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Chapters on each of these nations examine the response of the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), respectively, to the changes in the Soviet Union and the socialist world. Moreover, the question of what the "demise of communism" means for these actors is addressed in detail. The concluding chapter widens the discussion by asking if Soviet *perestroika* and the momentous changes it has ushered in signal the decline of the "revolutionary paradigm" in Latin America.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A recently published popular biography of Mikhail Gorbachev describes the Soviet leader as "the man who changed the world."[1] Anointing Gorbachev in this way is not pure hyperbole, as his policies of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and foreign policy "new thinking" have altered the course of world history. The reforms initiated by Gorbachev, which many argue have engendered the global "demise of Communism," are a topic of debate among the Latin American Left. One can find both pro and anti-*perestroika* viewpoints held by Latin American leftists.[2]

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[1]Gail Sheehy, The Man Who Changed the World: The Lives of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, (New York: Harper Collins, 1990).

[2]Arnoldo Martinez Verdugo, General Secretary of the Mexican Communist Party from 1963 to 1981, when the party became part of the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico says: "People ask me, `What does Gorbachev's *perestroika* signify for Latin America?' My answer is nothing, and this is very good." "In Third World, The Legacy of Marx Takes Many Shapes," New York Times, 24 January 1989, p. 11.

Conversely, José Riva, member of the Central Committee Political Commission and Central Committee secretary for international relations of the Dominican Communist Party posits that "some in the democratic movement view the change underway in the USSR with a considerable degree of skepticism. They believe that this change may end up weakening the revolutionary militancy of the Soviet Communists. This is a pessimistic attitude. At the same time, the conviction is widespread in the Left, democratic movement that *perestroika* in the Soviet Union will increase its

This study focuses on the impact of *perestroika* and "new thinking" in foreign policy on the revolutionary Left in Latin America. Specifically, it examines Soviet President Gorbachev's reforms, which have concrete foreign policy implications, and the effects of these changes on Marxist-Leninist movements in Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. This study will examine the receptivity to the new thinking of the Soviet Union on the part of these movements; the impact of "the demise of Communism" on the goals and tactics of the revolutionary Left; and the implications of Soviet reforms for the future of the revolutionary Left in Latin America.

Gorbachev, Perestroika and Foreign Policy "New Thinking"

Under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev the Soviet Union has embarked on major domestic reforms and proclaimed the need for new political thinking in international relations. A few years ago only the most serious specialists and scholars of Soviet affairs speculated about the prospects of internal reform in the Soviet Union. Today western policymakers in government and business, journalists, commentators, and the public

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economic potential and enable it . . . to step up assistance to the world's revolutionary forces." José Riva, "Perestroika in the USSR and the International Communist Movement," World Marxist Review 31 (September 1988): 92-109.

at large are interested in the incessant Soviet discussions of imminent domestic reform and foreign policy "new thinking."[3] Gorbachev's *perestroika* (restructuring), *glasnost* (speaking out publicly), and *novoye myshleniye* (new thinking) have prompted unprecedented debate about the present state of the Soviet economy, party leadership and foreign policy.[4]

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[3]William E. Odom posits that while the change is being attributed to General Secretary Gorbachev, the new course was actually initiated under his predecessor Yuriy Andropov, temporarily set aside by Konstantin Chernenko, and reasserted by Gorbachev. However, Andropov's anti-corruption and anti-alcoholism campaigns, he asserts, did not signal so clearly the extent of the intended transformation as have Gorbachev's *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and *novoye myshleniye*. See William E. Odom, "How Far Can Reform Go?" Problems of Communism 36 (November/December 1987): 18-33. Similarly, Jerry Hough argues that the extent to which Andropov was willing to support radical domestic reforms is unclear. Andropov did attack the social policy that Brezhnev had followed, calling for increased "discipline." "[D]iscipline meant not an unconditional right to a job, but a `right' to lose a job if a person was not productive." Further, Andropov wrote about the need for prices to correspond to costs and hinted at the need to raise subsidized meat prices. These concerns will be shared by Gorbachev. In his foreign policy pronouncements "Andropov had been more urgent . . . in pushing for improved relations with the West" and his international policy moved away from "Brezhnev's American-centered policy in the direction of a multipolar one." This desire to engage in a multi-polar foreign policy will also be shared by Gorbachev. See Jerry Hough, Russia and the West, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), pp. 148-152.

[4]There exists, of course, a range of interpretations of what is happening in the Soviet Union. Some think little is changing, except, perhaps in the "tone" of Soviet politics. See Adam Ulam, Alain Besancon, and Francoise Thom in "What's Happening in Moscow?" The National Interest, no. 8 (Summer 1987), pp. 11-13 and 27-30. Others see change --albeit

Gorbachev defines *perestroika* as a revolutionary and radical "elimination of obstacles hindering social and economic development, of outdated methods of managing the economy and of dogmatic stereotype mentality."[5] Scholars of the Soviet Union, as well as Gorbachev himself, argue that *perestroika* is a "revolution" born of necessity. The Stalinist system in the Soviet Union was in crisis by the mid-1980s. The Soviet Union was, and still is, suffering from serious economic stagnation. Rates of economic growth are declining, the economy is increasingly squeezed financially, and the government is increasingly unable to meet the nation's growing needs in housing,

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reversible--in the political but little meaningful change in the economic realm. See Marshall I. Goldman, Gorbachev's Challenge, (New York: Norton, 1987). Still others see much potential for change but claim it is too early to speak about major change. See Seweryn Bialer, Dissent, (Spring 1987), p. 188; William E. Odom, "The Future of the Soviet Political System," PS: Political Science and Politics 21 (June 1989). Finally, Jerry Hough (Russia and the West) and Archie Brown ("What's Happening in Moscow?" The National Interest, no. 8 [Summer 1987]: 6-10) argue that Gorbachev is committed to significant economic and political reform. Gorbachev is, however, working under considerable constraints and thus it is irresponsible to expect the USSR to transform itself into a Western-type pluralist democracy (or to assume that Gorbachev's reforms mean nothing because they have not engendered such a transformation). The changes begun by Gorbachev, they argue, could stimulate in time demands for a more thorough pluralization of the political and economic systems.

[5]Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World, (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 38.

foodstuffs, transportation, health services, and education.[6]

Soviet economic problems had a ripple effect in society at large. On the ideological plane, economic stagnation, coupled with the "ossified social thought . . . divorced from reality . . . typical of the period of the personality cult"[7] brought about greater resistance to the attempts to scrutinize constructively the problems that were emerging. New ideas were rejected as "the needs and opinions of ordinary working people, of the public at large, were ignored."[8] Moreover, a "credibility gap" grew within Soviet society as the propaganda emanating from the party leadership, which presented a trouble-free reality, did not match the reality experienced by Soviet citizens. "[E]verything that was proclaimed from the rostrums and printed in newspapers and textbooks was put in question. Decay began in public morals; . . . alcoholism, drug addiction and crime were growing; and the penetration of

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[6]Abel Aganbegyan, Head of the Economics Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences and chief economic advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev describes the USSR's immediate economic concerns (housing, food and agriculture, health services) and the nation's more fundamental or structural economic problems in "The Economics of Perestroika," International Affairs (London) 64 (Spring 1988): 179-185.

[7]Gorbachev, p. 34.

[8]Ibid., p. 7.

the stereotypes of mass culture alien to us, which bred vulgarity and low tastes and brought about ideological barrenness, increased."[9]

At the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee the basic principles of the new strategy of *perestroika* were announced. These were more clearly defined at the Conference of the CPSU Central Committee in June 1985, the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in February 1986, and at the June 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. The Soviet leadership's first priority was to reverse the nation's economic and social problems which were the most obvious signs of a crisis in the Stalinist system by which the USSR has been ruled for sixty years.

Lenin is turned to as the ideological source of Soviet restructuring. Gorbachev attempts to replace the Stalino-Brezhnevite system with a more efficient and more open model of socialism based on the work of Lenin. According to Lenin, socialism is the living creativity of the masses. Moreover, Lenin views socialism and democracy as indivisible. Therefore, as Gorbachev writes in Perestroika, Soviet reform must "activate the human factor," it must take into consideration the diverse interests of people, work collectives, public bodies and various social groups. Gorbachev claims that

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[9]Ibid., p. 8.

only by abandoning the "ossified social thought" identified with the "period of the personality cult" and launching a broad democratization of all aspects of society, which will lead to the full utilization of the human factor, will the Soviet economy and Soviet society advance.[10]

The domestic manifestations of the crisis in the Stalinist system have necessarily affected Gorbachev's foreign policy. The needs of domestic policy have merged with the failures of Brezhnev's foreign policy to impel the Soviet Union to look for new approaches to foreign and military policy.[11] Foreign Minister Eduard

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[10]Gorbachev's plan for reform is, as Seweryn Bialer posits, multifaceted. First, Gorbachev plans to use exhortation and appeals to national pride as well as greater openness within society in order to spur economic growth. Second, Gorbachev will argue in favor of increased domestic investment and growth in the domestic economy even at the expense of increased military spending or increased social payments to workers and peasants. Third, Gorbachev will stress "discipline" and "order," which, despite their Stalinist connotations, are code words for the introduction of market mechanisms into the Soviet economy. Finally, Gorbachev's plans for reform necessitate the replacement of aging members of the Central Committee with younger, more energetic officials who do not share the "ossified social thought" of their predecessors. See Seweryn Bialer, The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline, (New York: Knopf, 1986), pp. 150-153.

[11]Peter Zwick argues that new thinking, *perestroika* and *glasnost* are integral and mutually supportive elements of reform. "New Thinking in foreign policy contributes to the restructuring of the Soviet economy, and domestic economic reform and political openness influence the implementation and direction of Soviet foreign policy. Therefore new thinking in foreign policy must be understood in the larger context of

Shevardnadze has said that the main requirement in foreign policy

> is that our country should not bear additional expenditures in connection with the necessity of supporting our defense capability and the defense of our legitimate foreign policy interests. That means that we must seek paths to the limitation and reduction of military rivalry, to the removal of confrontational moments in relations with other states, to the clamping down of conflicts and crises.[12]

Gorbachev's "new thinking" also looks to Lenin for inspiration. In October 1986, in response to a question asking if a potential conflict should exist between peace and socialism, which should the USSR pursue, Gorbachev said that "Lenin in his time expressed an idea of colossal depth--concerning the priority of the interests of social development, of all human values, over the interests of one or another class." Gorbachev went on to speak of the importance in the nuclear age of

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Mikhail Gorbachev's vision of the Soviet future, rather than merely as a revision of certain aspects of Soviet international behavior." Peter Zwick, "New Thinking and New Foreign Policy Under Gorbachev," PS: Political Science and Politics 21 (June 1989): 215. Also see David Holloway, "Gorbachev's New Thinking," Foreign Affairs 68, (Winter 1988/Spring 1989): 66-81 for a discussion of the failures of Brezhnev's foreign policy.

[12]Quoted in Holloway, p. 78. According to Yuri Maslyukov, Chairman of the State Planning Committee, the Soviet Union's national debt is approaching $500 billion and is growing faster than that of the United States. The Soviet deficit equals 13.8 percent of the annual production of the country's goods and services. See "Top Soviet Planner Sees Debt of $500 Billion," Boston Globe, 6 August 1989, p. 2.

the "thesis of the priority of the all-human value of peace over all others to which different people are attached."[13] As David Holloway points out,

> taken by itself this proposition may seen banal, but it is significant in the Soviet context because it implies that the goals of peace and socialism may come into conflict, and further it provides justification for giving priority to the pursuit of cooperation with the West over search for unilateral advantage.[14]

Soviet new thinking, which Gorbachev set out most recently in his December 1988 speech at the United Nations, embraces a number of propositions about the nature of international relations in the modern world: human interests take precedence over the interests of any particular class; the world is becoming increasingly interdependent; there can be no victors in a nuclear war; security has to be based increasingly on political rather than military instruments; and security must be mutual, especially in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations, since insecurity on one side leads to insecurity on the other side too.[15] This new thinking

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[13]Quoted in Holloway, p. 70.

[14]Ibid.

[15]See Matthew Evangelista, "The New Soviet Approach to Security," World Policy Journal 3 (Fall 1986): 561-599 for a discussion of new thinking and Soviet security, nuclear weapons and disarmament. Also see Gerhard Wetting, "New Thinking on Security and East-West Relations," Problems of Communism 37 (March-April 1988): 1-14.

rejects many basic assumptions of earlier Soviet policy and should be understood as a response to the crisis in foreign relations to which Leonid I. Brezhnev's policies had brought the Soviet Union by the early 1980s as well as the need for domestic reform.[16]

The USSR and Latin America

In the last twenty years as the Soviets' understanding and knowledge of Latin America has increased the Soviet Union has become a significant actor in the region.[17] The Soviet military presence has increased considerably in nations like Cuba, Nicaragua, and Peru; Soviet trade with the area, especially Argentina, has expanded; and Soviet diplomatic ties and normal state-to-state relations now encompass virtually all the countries in the area.[18]

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[16]Jerry Hough argues that Brezhnev's foreign policy was too reliant on a bipolar relationship with the U.S. which led the Soviet Union to accept the status quo in U.S. foreign policy. Gorbachev, however, desires to move beyond this bipolar foreign policy and he initiates a multipolar policy which plays upon the "contradictions between the three centers of Capitalism--the U.S., Western Europe and Japan." Jerry Hough, Russia and the West, p. 223. Gorbachev's call for a "common European home" is one manifestation of this shift in foreign policy, and it has had the effect of challenging the traditional U.S. position in Western Europe. See, for example, "U.S. Voicing Fears of Effect on West from Gorbachev," The New York Times, 16 September 1989, p. 1.

[17]Howard Wiarda, "The Rising Soviet Presence in Latin America," World Affairs 149 (Fall 1986): 59.

[18]Ibid.

Not surprisingly, the Soviets have also adapted a wider range of strategies for the region,[19]

> they seek to influence democratic governments as well as gain control of the opposition to repressive ones, and they have adapted their policies to the individual situations of the distinct Latin American countries.[20]

At the same time there exist limits on the Soviets increasing their role in the region. "Latin America is far away from the Soviet Union geographically, there are not many vital Soviet interests there, and Latin America ranks low on the Soviet list of priority areas."[21] The Soviets are also cognizant of the overwhelming local advantage of the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere, and their domestic economic priorities and reorganization plans may limit their playing a significant role in the future. This latter point is discussed in considerable detail by Costa Rican political scientist Rodolfo Cerdas Cruz, who argues that:

> We are witnessing the dawn of a new era in which the internal priorities of Soviet politics are acquiring an unprecedented degree of importance in the political life of the country. The demands of the various sectors for substantial improvements in public services, supply of consumer goods, improvements in the educational system,

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[19]See Robert Wesson, "The Soviet Way in Latin America," World Affairs 149 (Fall 1986): 67-75. This issue of World Affairs is devoted to the Soviet Union and Latin America.

[20]Wiarda, p. 59.

[21]Ibid.

> housing and health, etc., are beginning to occupy a position of priority in the institutional life of the Soviet Union. Such demands, previously controlled by the dictatorial grasp of the party over various channels for expressing social grievances, are being made even more vociferously and are facing the CPSU leadership, no longer in a position to decide on the convenience or inconvenience of resolving these problems, with the urgent necessity to respond to concrete petitions and protests which cannot, as hitherto, be postponed indefinitely without doing serious damage to the legitimacy of the system.[22]

All this may lead to a more limited scope for action by the Soviet Union, fewer possibilities for adventurism and less favorable conditions for undertaking risky commitments in Third World countries and more particularly in Latin America.

> Under these conditions, one can forecast the following political result: a contraction in the funds allocated to international solidarity. Although these will not disappear completely and will maintain sizable levels, primarily for reasons to do with the global interests of the USSR, for the first time sufficient and explicit political, moral and economic justifications will need to be found, in a social climate where greater controls are operating, disputes over better distribution of resources becoming more acute and internal pressures for expenditure becoming more openly apparent.[23]

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[22]Rodolfo Cerdas Cruz, "New Directions in Soviet Policy in Latin America," Journal of Latin American Studies 21 (February 1989): 2.

[23]Ibid., p. 4. W. Raymond Duncan posits that for the first time complaints about poor management of the Cuban economy or turmoil in the Nicaraguan economy may create currents of opinion and social pressures for a change of policy. See The Soviet Union and Cuba. Interests and Influence, (New York: Praeger, 1985),

The changes taking place in the USSR and the Soviet bloc are tending to strengthen national responses to local problems and to lessen the weight and significance of demands coming from the international arena, especially from the Third World countries in general and Latin America in particular.[24] To this may be added the new position of Latin America in the global strategy of the USSR:

> The ideological tendencies which wanted to see a shift of the world revolutionary axis to the Third World and to convert it into a forum for confrontation with imperialism have suffered an irreparable defeat with the new orientations of *perestroika*.[25]

The Soviet debate on the Third World has ranged widely over the nature of its revolution, regional and national differentiation, stages of development, the possibilities of non-capitalist means of development, and other issues, however during the period from 1978

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p. 193. Edward Gonzales writes: "For Castro, Gorbachev's new priorities will probably mean not only more limited largess for the Cuban economy but also renewed Soviet pressure for Havana to put its own economic house in order. . . . Castro may find Soviet support for an activist Cuban foreign policy in the Third World less forthcoming, not only because of Gorbachev's domestic priorities but also because of Soviet attempts to stabilize the more important strategic relationship with the U.S." Edward Gonzalez, "Cuba, the Third World, and the Soviet Union," in The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades, eds. Francis Fukuyama and Andrzej Korbonski, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 67-81.

[24]Cruz, p. 5.

[25]Ibid., p. 6.

(shortly before the Sandinista revolution) until 1985 (which saw the infancy of *perestroika*) the Soviet Union sought to heighten regional conflicts and saw in the politico-military instability of the region confirmation of the increasing weakness of imperialism.[26]

In 1982, the Communist Party Conference in Havana declared that the center of gravity of the Latin American revolution had shifted to Central America and the Caribbean.[27] Revolution there was not simply democratic revolution aimed at overthrowing the military dictatorships allied to imperialism, but also a struggle to establish by a continuous process a socialist system. Writing before the victory of the Sandinistas, Mijail Gornov and Yuri Koroliov[28] argued that the foundations had already been laid for socialist and democratic revolution in Latin America, and especially in Central

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[26]See Jerry F. Hough, The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options, (Washington DC: Brookings, 1986) and Joseph G. Whelan and Michael J. Dixon, The Soviet Union in the Third World: Threat to World Peace?, (Washington DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1986).

[27]Cruz, p. 7.

[28]According to Jerry Hough, "M. F. Gornov" is the pseudonym of M.F. Kudachin, Head of the Latin American Sector of the Central Committee. Struggle . . ., p. 173, note 90. America Latina describes Yuri Koroliov as a Doctor of Historical Science who works with the Latin American Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

America.[29] Therefore the reformist tendencies seeking to resolve the transition to democracy had to be countered in order to open the way for the revolutionary designs of the masses and of the working class.[30]

Following the Sandinista success in 1979, it became clear that the armed struggle was the preferred road to success. It was this alone that had resulted in victory for the socialist revolutions in Latin America.[31] This reading of the political processes in Latin America in general and Central America in particular "was in line with Soviet global strategies for the Third World in its confrontation with the West and especially the United States."[32] However, it did not correspond, as *perestroika* itself came to demonstrate, with any real economic, financial or technological capacity on the part of the USSR to sustain the changing socialist trends being imminently proclaimed throughout Latin America and especially in Central America.

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[29]Mijail Gornov and Yuri Koroliov, "*El Torbellino Centroamericano*," América Latina (Moscow), no. 6, (1978): 7.

[30]Ibid., p. 19.

[31]Sergo Mikoyan, "*Las Particularidades de la Revolución en Nicaragua y sus Tareas desde el punto de Vista de la Teoría y la Práctica del Movimiento Librador*," América Latina (Moscow), no. 3 (1980): 103.

[32]Cruz, p. 8.

When Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary and *perestroika* was initiated, it was obvious that a realistic survey of the Soviet Union's own economic position and the socialist struggle had to be made, and that the impossibility of pursuing the internationalist line advocated by the Brezhnev administration would be recognized. Soviet "new thinking" is therefore of particular significance for Latin America and more specifically for Central America. Yuri Koroliov, who in 1978 emphasized the taking up of arms in order to hasten the revolution, had, by 1988, changed his tune. The struggle now proposed is not class struggle, but rather it is a struggle for national resurgence.

As Koroliov argues in "*Metamorfosis de la Interdependencia: Aspecto Regional*," the struggle for socialism is postponed. It is evident now that in many Latin American countries the right conditions for "bourgeois" democracy have been created, and sufficiently stable social structures have been erected to enable such a "bourgeois democracy" to function. In practical political terms any attempt to change this state of affairs will require lengthy preparation. The hour of revolution is no longer nigh--it is in fact postponed indefinitely. These are countries that no longer belong to the group of underdeveloped states that are fertile ground for revolution, for they have now

joined that group where the conditions only ripen after long and complex preparation.[33] Such a change in conception is in keeping with the thinking of Leonid Medvedko, who, in the New Times of Moscow, wrote:

> The present global parity of forces is a "balance of impotence" in regional conflicts. None of the belligerents is able to achieve convincing superiority, let alone victory. Now, it is, of course, immoral to stir up conflicts and unleash wars in the hope of winning an easy victory, by taking advantage of the difficulties experienced by one or the other country. But to add fuel to the flames of war in the hope of deriving somewhat dubious benefits is even more immoral. History has amended the classic definition of war. More often than not, it is a continuation of immoral policy. Hence it is necessary to change policy in order to put a stop to wars.[34]

This view is shared by Radomir Bogdanov, in an article published in the official organ of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, in which he clearly states the "nuclear arms have actually equated the destinies of capitalism and socialism in the face of military confrontation, have made them equally vulnerable, and have posed a broader problem than that of choosing a social system--the problem of the survival of

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[33]Yuri Koroliov, "*Metamorfosis de la Interdependencia: Aspecto Regional*," America Latina (Moscow), no. 4 (1988), p. 11.

[34]Quoted in Cruz, p. 8.

mankind."[35] For this very reason, contrary to prior political practice and Marxist-Leninist ideological conception,

> international relations must be placed in a context divorced from the correlation of forces. The new system of international relations and its problems must be approached from a basis of common interests and mutual compromise, with reciprocal concessions and without destabilizing the international situation by taking unilateral action.[36]

"This new Soviet focus on the nature and character of international relations and peaceful coexistence, divorced from the notion of class, is proving to be a debate of major political significance."[37] Soviet leaders have turned to Lenin's claim that "the interests of social development take precedence over the interests of the proletariat" in order to justify the new less radical emphasis. It is being argued that there is a global interest to which the particular must be sacrificed, whether it be class based, national or regional. It is not a question of renouncing class struggle in an antagonistic society, but of the form that it takes in the nuclear age, when the future of humanity is at stake; it is a question of identifying

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[35]Radomir Bogdanov, "From the Balance of Forces to a Balance of Interests," International Affairs (Moscow), no. 4 (1988): 56.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Cruz, p. 10.

the class struggle with the problem of the survival of mankind.[38] "The Communist parties of Latin America understand, it is said, the need for creative analysis of the situation of countries in that continent and of relating national problems to global ones."[39]

Cruz posits that the message being sent by the Soviet leadership to the revolutionary Left in Latin America is one of "historical patience." Although there has been no official renunciation of armed struggle, the leftist thesis of armed struggle and revolutionary violence as the midwife of history must be reconsidered. Pravda on December 14, 1986 had this to say:

> Violence on that continent [Latin America] can easily become transformed from the midwife to the gravedigger of history. The birth of socialism may end in the death of socialism. In the present situation any local conflict may escalate into regional and even world conflict. . . . The nuclear age demands of revolutionary forces the most serious consideration of decisions over armed struggle and the definitive rejection of actions characteristic of leftist extremism.[40]

The remainder of this work will examine the receptiveness of the Latin American revolutionary Left to the new Soviet policies of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and foreign policy new thinking. Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of Soviet thinking about revolution

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Quoted in Ibid.

in the Third World from Lenin to Brezhnev and also discusses the development of the Communist movement in Latin America during this period. Chapter 3 focuses on the changes in Soviet thought ushered in by Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine the receptivity to *perestroika* and foreign policy "new thinking" on the part of the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), respectively. These chapters also examine the impact of Soviet new thinking on the goals and tactics of each revolutionary movement. Chapter 7 concludes the study with a discussion of the implications of *perestroika* and foreign policy "new thinking" for the future of the revolutionary Left in Latin America.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET THINKING ABOUT THE THIRD WORLD AND LATIN AMERICA

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the implications of Soviet *perestroika* and foreign policy new thinking for the revolutionary Left in Latin America. This chapter attempts to "set the stage" for this discussion by providing a historical overview of Soviet revolutionary strategy and Latin America's position in it. As Jerry Hough posits, Soviet debates on revolutionary strategy have focused on two crucial questions: "What is the nature of the state in foreign countries and does it have to be overthrown by violent revolution if there is to be hope for social progress;" and "What is the natural tendency of historical development as feudalism . . . begins to disintegrate with the growth of capitalism. . . . Are major historical forces leading to socialist revolution in the near term."[1] These questions will be addressed in this chapter by focusing on the historical development of Soviet thought[2] concerning revolution in the Third

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[1]Jerry Hough, The Struggle for the Third World, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1986), p. 142.

[2]Earlier there had been a western belief that there is no serious debate in the Soviet Union concerning foreign policy. Hence analysts have been inclined to write of "the Soviet position" on various issues.

World[3], and by examining the policies and strategies adopted by Latin American Communists and Communist Parties in their attempt to engender "social progress" in the region.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Marx and the "colonial question" and proceeds to examine Soviet thinking about revolution in the Third World from Lenin to Brezhnev. Parallel with this discussion, this chapter also traces the development of the Communist movement in Latin America from 1919, when the Comintern began to pay increased attention to the colonial and semi-colonial worlds, to 1985 and the ascension to power by Mikhail Gorbachev. Since 1985, Soviet ideas about international politics and how the Soviet Union should

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However, in the 1980s there was a proliferation of western studies detailing Soviet foreign policy debates which all make the point, explicitly or implicitly, that speaking of "the" Soviet position on any foreign policy issue is a dubious venture. Probably the best known of these studies is Hough's The Struggle for the Third World. However see also Daniel S. Papp, Soviet Perceptions of the Developing World in the 1980s: The Ideological Basis, (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1985); Edme Dominguez, "*La Visión Académica Soviética Sobre el Caribe y Centroamérica (1960-1984)*," in América Latina Y La Unión Soviética: Una Nueva Relación, ed. Augusto Varas, (Buenos Aires: *Grupo Editor Latinoamericano*, 1987); Allen Lynch, The Soviet Study of International Relations, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Margot Light, The Soviet Theory of International Relations, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

[3]In this chapter "Third World" and "developing nations" will be used interchangeably even though Soviet writers prefer the latter.

perform as a superpower have been in constant flux. These ideas and their implications for the revolutionary Left in Latin America will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Marx and the Colonial Question

Classical Marxism provided an analysis of the contradictions of capitalist society and indicated means by which its revolutionary overthrow might be accomplished. It was only peripherally concerned with the colonial world, and its analysis of the manner in which the political practice of the working class movement might take account of developing metropolitan-colonial economic links is fragmentary and incomplete.

It fell to Lenin to develop the classical Marxist heritage on the national and colonial question and, in particular, to specify the nature of the connection between revolutions in advanced capitalist society and those in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. He summed up the tasks now facing socialists in the words, "Proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!" Lenin acknowledged that, strictly speaking, no warrant for such a formulation could be found in any of Marx's writings; but the Communist Manifesto, he emphasized, had been written in "completely different

circumstances."[4] It was the task of the science of revolution to adapt itself to such changes in its environment.[5]

Yet, when Marx did address the issue directly, as in On Colonialism, it was clear that, in his estimation, the cruelties of colonialism were justified by its historical effect of breaking down traditional socio-economic structures and paving the way for the universalization of the capitalist system.[6] Yet, Marx's ideas were sometimes contradictory. While attributing the political relations among nations to the needs of their economic "base," Marx, in un-Marxist fashion, was known to discuss the influence of non-economic factors in explaining colonialism.

> In an article written for the New York Herald Marx gave an analysis of Persian-Afghan political antagonisms founded on diversity of race, blended with historical reminiscences, kept alive by frontier quarrels and rival

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[4]Daniel S. Papp posits that Marx himself was rarely concerned with the colonial question and with the role that colonies played in the global capitalist system of his time because "at the time of Marx's writings, the world had not yet experienced what has been described as `the second round of empire,' which occurred during the last two decades of the nineteenth century" (Papp, pp. 3-4).

[5]Stephen White, "Colonial Revolution and the Communist International, 1919-1924," Science and Society 40 (Summer 1976): 173-193.

[6]Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, On Colonialism, (New York: International Publishers), 1972.

claims . . . sanctioned by religious antagonism.[7]

Just as colonialism was recognized as having the historical effect of breaking down traditional socio-economic structures and paving the way for capitalism and eventually socialism, Marx argued that nationalism was a powerful tool that revolutionaries could employ against the established political and social orders in order to further the movement of history. Despite the seeming ideological incompatibilities of Marxism and nationalism,[8] Marx was an ardent advocate of Polish nationalism directed as it was against Prussian, Russian and Austrian domination, despite the fact that it was limited to the Polish upper and middle-classes.[9] Similarly, Marx's writings on the American Civil War illustrate his support for the bourgeois but progressive

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[7]Allen Lynch, p. 11. A major theme running through Lynch's work is that Marxist-Leninist ideology and Soviet thinking about the international system is more complex, contradictory, and nuanced than often believed in the West.

[8]According to Walker Connor, "nationalism is predicated upon the assumption that the most fundamental divisions of humankind are the many vertical cleavages that divide people into ethnonational groups. Marxism . . . rests upon the conviction that the most fundamental human divisions are horizontal class distinctions that cut across national groupings" (Walker Connor, The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy, [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984], p. 5).

[9]Papp, p. 4.

North in its struggle against the feudal and regressive South.[10]

Lenin and Stalin: 1917-1953

By Lenin's time, nearly all of Africa and Asia were controlled by Great Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Russia, and the United States. Great Britain alone governed one-fifth of the world's land mass and one-fourth of its population. Lenin's thoughts on the colonial world were more sharply drawn than Marx's. In 1916 Lenin wrote his most famous commentary on the colonial world, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism. Adam Ulam argues that this work provides "the single most important theoretical treatise" for the study of all Soviet foreign policy, not just Soviet perceptions of the colonial world.[11]

Lenin's argument was derived from earlier works by J. A. Hobson and Rudolf Hilferding, but his conclusions were new. Beginning in the 1870s, Lenin argues, capitalism passed beyond its constructive and largely peaceful phase and entered the stage of monopoly capitalism. This stage in the development of capitalism

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[10]Saul K. Padover, ed., On America and the Civil War, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 94.

[11]Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Co-Existence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973, (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 27.

is characterized by the scarcity of domestic investment opportunities in the most advanced capitalist countries, which, in turn, necessitates the search for colonial territories where both cheap labor and raw materials can be obtained.

The subsequent imperialist competition for colonies is significant for two reasons. First, the advanced capitalist nations were able, through the acquisition of colonies, to postpone the internal contradictions of advanced capitalism which, Marx argued, would lead to its overthrow as nations reached a high level of industrialization. Lenin posited that the rise in living standards of the English, French, and German workers had been purchased through the exploitation of colonial peoples. Therefore, the good Marxist should feel no qualms about allying himself with even the middle or upper classes of the oppressed nationality if they oppose colonial domination. No matter how reactionary their social views, their nationalist opposition to European colonialism make them natural allies. Second, the capitalist competition for colonies was bound to turn into political and then military competition from which there would be no escape short of

the destruction of capitalism as an international system.[12]

The implications of Lenin's work were considerable.

> First, Marxist analysis was no longer primarily domestic in nature; it was now international as well. Second, Marx had argued that the weakest link in the capitalist system was the revolutionary resentment building in the proletariat worker in developed capitalist societies; Lenin maintained that capitalism's weakest link was actually it colonial possessions. Third, Lenin built on Marx's willingness to side with the more progressive forces in society to foment changes and revolution, and argued that the national bourgeoisie of colonial countries, that is, those elements in society that both resented external control of their homeland and wished to maintain private ownership of the means of production, should actually be seen as allies of convenience by the revolutionary proletariat in their assault on the global capitalist system. Thus, the proletariat revolution would be facilitated by the national bourgeoisie. Finally, the focus of revolution moved from developed European societies to underdeveloped colonial territories. As the weakest link in the capitalist system, and with indigenous forces both willing and able to weaken and break that link, Lenin concluded that the opportunities for revolution were as great, if not greater, in the colonies as in Europe.[13]

In his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," prepared for the Second Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in June 1920, Lenin argued that liberation would result

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[12]V. I. Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, (New York: International Publishers, 1977), and Ulam, pp. 27-29.

[13]Papp, p. 5.

from the joint struggle by the proletariat of the advanced countries and the subjugated peoples of the colonial areas. Acknowledging that liberation movements would usually have a bourgeois-nationalist character initially, Lenin nevertheless endorsed temporary cooperation with them provided that the proletarian movement, however rudimentary, maintained its sense of identity and independence of action.[14] At the Second Congress Lenin theorized that the colonial territories, like the developed capitalist states, would experience a two-stage revolution. The national bourgeoisie would lead the first stage which would culminate in national independence and bourgeois democracy for their country. The second stage of the revolution would be led by communists and would eventually lead to a dictatorship of the proletariat.[15]

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[14]V. I. Lenin, "Communism and the East: Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," in The Lenin Anthology, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 619-625.

[15]Papp, pp. 5-6; Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflicts, (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1983), p. 181.

Lenin's prescription for colonial revolution met with strong opposition from the Indian communist M. N. Roy. He argued that the colonial bourgeoisie, by virtue of its weakness and its dependent relationship with the colonial powers, was incapable of leading the first stage of the revolution. Roy advocated communist leadership of the first stage of the revolution, as well as the second, positing that this would hasten the rise of socialism. The Comintern's solution to the Lenin-Roy debate was to pass both resolutions, thus postponing an important theoretical debate.

Immediately after coming to power, the Bolshevik government called on Persians, Turks, Arabs, Hindus and all other peoples of the "East" to overthrow their imperialist rulers. At Lenin's instigation, a Congress of the Peoples of the East was convened by the Comintern in Baku in September 1920 in the hope of hastening anti-imperialist revolution. At the Baku congress "a holy war was declared against British imperialism."[16] According to Alvin Z. Rubinstein, the congress:

> Called for world revolution and tried to attract the support of Muslims of the East for an all-out struggle against the West. At this time this meant opposition to British and French power in the Middle East; association of Soviet Russian and the Bolshevik Revolution with the aspirations of indigenous peoples seeking independence; and penetration of bourgeois-nationalist freedom movements by pro-Moscow communists. [While the Baku Congress never fulfilled Lenin's hopes] . . . its theme became a permanent part of the Soviet foreign policy outlook.[17]

Indeed, though Lenin did not live to see Russia reap the benefits of decolonization, he anticipated the demise of colonial empires.

> The movement in the Colonies is still regarded as an insignificant national and completely peaceful movement. However, that is not the case. For great changes have taken place in this respect since the beginning of the twentieth century, namely, millions and

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[16]Klaus Von Beyme, The Soviet Union in World Politics, (Brookfield, MA: Gower, 1987), p. 118.

[17]Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Moscow's Third World Strategy, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 16.

> hundreds of millions--actually the overwhelming majority of the world's population--are now coming out as an independent and revolutionary factor. And it should be perfectly clear that the coming decisive battles of the world's revolution, this movement of the majority of the world's population, originally aimed at national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary role than we have been led to expect.[18]

Similarly, in his last article, written on March 2, 1923 and devoted primarily to the need for improving the efficiency of the state bureaucracy, Lenin expressed optimism over the outcome of the Soviet Union's struggle to defend itself against imperialism by virtue of the fact that Russia, India, China, and others "account for the overwhelming majority of the world's population" and they are engaged in the struggle for liberation, thus assuring a complete victory for socialism.[19]

Lenin's incapacitation and death (1920-1924) unleashed a power struggle within the Kremlin that absorbed much of the attention of the Soviet leadership during the 1924-1928 period. Joseph Stalin "made the colonial question part of his own program in the maneuvering to possess Lenin's mantle of legitimacy."[20]

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[18]V. I. Lenin, The National Liberation Movement in the East, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957), pp. 289-290.

[19]Quoted in Rubinstein, p. 17.

[20]Rubinstein, p. 17.

Hence, in a series of lectures entitled The Foundations of Leninism, which he gave three months after Lenin's death, Stalin lauded Lenin for illuminating interrelationships that exist and affect the future of revolution in Europe, and for strengthening socialism in the Soviet Union. Stalin also reiterated Lenin's thesis that bastions of capitalism can be toppled by depriving them of the raw materials and markets of the colonies, declaring that the road to victory lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movements of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism.[21]

After Stalin emerged preeminent from the leadership struggle, Soviet interest and involvement in the colonial world occupied, at best, third place in Soviet priorities, behind institutionalizing Stalin's rule and building socialism in one country, and coping with the threat presented by capitalist encirclement.[22] "Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that Stalin and other Soviet leaders of his era considered the colonial territories to be unimportant or insignificant."[23]

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[21]J. V. Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975).

[22]Papp, p. 6.

[23]Ibid.

Stalin had been intimately involved with questions of colonial nationalism and revolution long before he acquired his ultimate position in the Soviet Union. As Commissar for Nationality Affairs he had been a leading Bolshevik theoretician on the nationalities question within Russia. On external nationalities questions he implored his fellow revolutionaries shortly after the revolution that "the East should not be forgotten for a single moment, if only because it represents the `inexhaustible' reserve and `most reliable' rear of world imperialism." To Stalin, communists had to "break the age-long sleep of the oppressed peoples of the East" and "rouse them to fight imperialism," for without the colonial peoples, "the definite triumph of socialism" is "unthinkable." Therefore, one duty of the communists was "to intervene in the growing spontaneous movement in the East and to develop it further into a conscious struggle against imperialism." Stalin reiterated these and similar viewpoints throughout the early and mid-1920s.[24]

Under Stalin, the Soviet policy of alliances with nationalist movements was refined and reinforced. Stalin, writing on "The National Question" argued:

> This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support every national

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[24]Joseph Stalin, Works, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973), pp. 143-154 and 174-176.

> movement, everywhere and always, in every individual concrete case. It means that support must be given to such national movements as tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism,and not to strengthen and preserve it. Cases occur when the national movements in certain oppressed countries come into conflict with the interests of the development of the proletariat movement. In such cases support is . . . entirely out of the question. . . . In the forties of the last century Marx supported the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians and was opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and South Slavs. Why? Because the Czechs and South Slavs were then "reactionary nations," . . . outposts of absolutism, whereas the Poles and Hungarians were "revolutionary nations," fighting against absolutism. . . . The struggle that the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a revolutionary struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism. . . . For the same reasons, the struggle that the Egyptian merchants and bourgeois intellectuals are waging for the independence of Egypt is objectively a revolutionary struggle, despite the bourgeois origin . . . of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement.[25]

Unfortunately for Stalin, his efforts to support revolutionary nationalists in the colonial world between 1924 and 1928 were less than successful. Stalin's experience with China was especially disastrous.

> Even prior to Lenin's death, local Chinese communists were urged to join the Kuomintang and in 1933, the Soviets expressed support for Sun Yat-Sen, while noting that "conditions for the successful establishment of either communism or Sovietism" did not exist in China. In the mid-twenties, Stalin argued that Chinese communists, waiting for a later chance to take over the government, could best

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[25]Stalin, The Foundations of Leninism, pp. 76-78.

> advance their own fortunes by collaborating with the nationalists. Chiang Kai-Shek, however, successfully out-maneuvered the communists and in 1927 he nearly annihilated them all.[26]

Whether because of his failures in China, or because of new perceptions of Soviet domestic political and economic realities and international threats to Soviet security, Stalin used the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928 to alter many of Lenin's and his own earlier assessments of the colonial world. While not abandoning the colonial world,[27] the Soviets at the Sixth Congress retreated from earlier overly optimistic evaluations of the colonial national bourgeoisie. The new "united front from below" strategy adopted at the Congress urged communists in the developing world to unmask the deceptions of the national bourgeoisie. If revolution were to occur, the communists were to lead it.[28]

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[26]Carol R. Saivetz and Sylvia Woodby, Soviet-Third World Relations, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), p. 6.

[27]A point made quite clearly by Edward T. Wilson, "Russia's Historic Stake in Black Africa," in Communism in Africa, ed. David E. Albright (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 81-83.

[28]Papp, p. 7; see also Hosmer and Wolfe, pp. 182-183. The latter argue that the Comintern's abrupt shift to a more militant line in this period reflected internal Soviet politics. It was used by Stalin, they posit, against Bukharin, who was identified with the previous more moderate line.

Rubinstein writes that despite the Comintern's new "ultrarevolutionary line" Stalin, prior to World War II

> chose not to incite communist agitation in the colonies for fear of provoking the already deeply ingrained suspicions of Britain and France, the principal colonial powers and his principal allies against Hitler. Nor in any event was he in a position to do much: the ruling colonial powers were firmly in control; the national liberation movements were still in the formative stages; the communists were weak; and the Soviet Union lacked the capability for direct involvement.[29]

World War II precipitated massive changes in the international system, but brought no major changes in Soviet policy toward the colonial world. Stalin's priorities were elsewhere, especially in Europe, and his resources remained limited.

> For Stalin, newly independent states not under control of communists subservient to Stalin represented more a threat to be contained than an opportunity to be exploited. As a result, Soviet spokesmen and experts on the colonial and newly independent world decried the independence of the new nations as a sham and classified the national bourgeoisie of those countries as imperialist collaborationists and counterrevolutionaries. Even notables such as Gandhi and Nehru were considered little more

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[29]Rubinstein, p. 17. Moreover, Fernando Claudin argues that Stalin's concern with the creation of "socialism in one country" meant that Comintern policy emphasized that class struggles and national liberation struggles of peoples oppressed by imperialism were subordinate to the desires and needs of the USSR. In effect, despite the rhetoric, the building of socialism in colonial areas was subordinated to the building of socialism in the Soviet Union. Fernando Claudin, The Communist Movement, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), pp. 71-91.

than capitalist stooges during the immediate postwar period.[30]

Similarly, the victory of Mao's forces in China in 1949 "did nothing to alter Stalin's view of the national bourgeoisie in the newly independent countries; for that was a revolution won by a Communist party against Soviet advice."[31] The Chinese Revolution's success did, however, complicate the Soviet position in the developing world since revolutionaries now had a second successful model to emulate.

Latin American Communism: Growth and Dissolution

Sheldon B. Liss in his 1984 Marxist Thought in Latin America, points out that while laymen commonly associate Marx with revolutionary thought and often erroneously attribute to him theories of imperialism, in reality Marx and Engels knew little and "never had more than an indirect and tangential interest in the

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[30]Papp, p. 8.

[31]Ibid.

region."[32] Lenin was both more well-read and more interested in Latin America.

> Lenin read A. B. Hart's The Monroe Doctrine (1916), which heightened his awareness of the growth of "protectorates" and of the role of the United States in Latin America. He referred to the Latin American republics as "dependent countries; . . . which officially are politically independent, but which are in fact enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence." His thinking formed the foundations upon which were built the dependency themes that became popular among some Marxist and non-Marxist Latin American scholars in the late 1960s and 1970s.[33]

With the ascendence of Lenin and the emergence of the Third International in 1919, increased attention was paid to the colonial and semi-colonial worlds. The Comintern focused its colonial agitation on the Far East and, as Regis Debray points out, "it came very late to an interest in Latin America."[34] Part of this was due to the fact that Latin American nations were hard to characterize. "The combination of class struggle and

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[32]Sheldon B. Liss, Marxist Thought in Latin America, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 18. Ronaldo Munck argues that "the sheer ignorance of Marx and Engels about Latin America . . . led them to support the (`progressive') invasion of Mexico by the United States in 1847, and to launch an unfounded diatribe against the leader of the South American independence struggle, Simon Bolivar" (Ronaldo Munck, Revolutionary Trends in Latin America, [Montreal: McGill University Centre for Developing Area Studies, 1984], p. 6).

[33]Liss, p. 25.

[34]Regis Debray, A Critique of Arms, (London: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 41.

national struggle in Latin America . . . was not clearly grasped by the early Comintern."[35] According to Kermit McKenzie, it was not until 1928 that the Comintern revived Lenin's term "dependent country" (used in Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, to characterize Argentina) on the prompting of Ricardo Parades of Ecuador, to cover those areas which had been penetrated economically by imperialism but which still retain a higher degree of political independence than colonies and semi-colonies.[36] Perhaps most importantly, however, the Russian leaders of the Communist International exhibited little interest in Latin America in the 1920s because Soviet foreign policy was more concerned with the danger of "encirclement." Soviet leaders saw the British and the French as the major threat, and so concentrated their extra-European activities in the Asiatic and African territories of those Great Powers. The United States was considered a minor foe at the time and Latin America was considered of small importance.[37]

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[35]Munck, p. 8.

[36]Kermit McKenzie, Comintern and World Revolution, 1928-1943, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 81.

[37]Victor Alba, Historia Del Comunismo En América Latina, (Mexico: *Ediciones Occidentales*, 1954), pp. 1-15.

Members of the newly formed Latin American Communist Parties took the initiative to establish links with the Comintern at this time.[38] Two Argentine observers attended the First Congress of the Comintern and there were three Latin American delegates at the Second Congress, which decided the policy of the national and colonial questions. In 1924 a Latin American Secretariat was set up by the Comintern, however, "it prompted accusations of Eurocentrism when only one Latin American, Victorio Codovilla of Argentina, was appointed to it."[39]

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 demonstrated a more sustained interest in Latin America. It was attended by delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Uruguay. A special Latin American Commission was established to elaborate policy which, reflecting events in China, emphasized the bourgeois-democratic nature of the coming revolution. Jules Humbert Droz, a Swiss communist made

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[38]Robert J. Alexander, in his influential Communism in Latin America points out that it was to a very considerable extent admiration of the Russian Revolution which led to the founding of the Latin American Communist parties. Robert J. Alexander, Communism in Latin America, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960), p. 15. Communist parties developed in those countries with the most advanced development of capitalist relations of production. These included Argentina and Mexico (1919), Uruguay and Chile (1921), and Brazil (1922).

[39]Munck, p. 8.

the Latin Secretary of the Comintern, maintained that the revolutionary movement in Latin America must be

> assimilated to the type of bourgeois-democratic movement . . . in semi-colonial countries, where the agrarian problem and the problem of anti-imperialism form the central focus.

However, "the weakness and the non-revolutionary character of the bourgeoisie" meant that the bourgeois-democratic revolution could only by completed "under the leadership of the proletariat."[40] During this period, Communist Party leaders "were searching for Latin American Kuomintangs," such as the Peruvian Alianza Popular Revolucionaria (APRA), a nationalist formation led by Haya de la Torre, in which the proletariat would find its national bourgeois ally.[41] Moreover, at this

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[40]Quoted in Ibid. The apparent contradiction in this line regarding the nature of the revolution can be traced back to the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 which endorsed the positions of both Lenin and Roy. See footnote number 15.

[41]This tactic was opposed by a number of independent Marxist thinkers in Latin America, including José Carlos Mariategui of Peru, Julio Antonio Mella, a leader of Cuba's Communist Party in its early years, and Chile's Emilio Recabarren. All three opposed any collaboration with bourgeois nationalists. According to Mariategui, "the Latin American bourgeoisie . . . is totally unwilling to consider the idea that a second struggle for independence is necessary . . . the ruling class has no yearning for a greater degree of national autonomy" (José Carlos Mariategui, "The Anti-Imperialist Perspective," New Left Review, 70, [November/December 1972], p. 67). See also Munck, pp. 9-15; Liss, pp. 75-79, 129-138, 243-247; and Harry E. Vanden, "Mariategui: *Marxismo*, *Comunismo*, and Other Bibliographic Notes," Latin American Research Review 14 (Fall 1979): 61-86.

time communist parties in the region increasingly came under the control of Stalinist leaders whose main characteristic was "their unswerving devotion to the powerful Soviet bureaucracy, to which they were linked by innumerable material and political ties."[42]

During the years 1929-1935, as the Soviet Union was making its first great efforts to industrialize and to destroy the country's independent peasantry, the Comintern embarked on a policy of building communist parties free from bourgeois or social democratic influence, positing that in all the Latin American countries, "the petty bourgeoisie and the nascent industrial bourgeoisie are directly linked to imperialist interests," and based firmly in the "real revolutionary classes"--agricultural workers, impoverished peasants, and the expanding proletariat of

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These early leaders of the communist movement were soon replaced by a different breed of leader, ones more willing to follow the Moscow line unconditionally. Munck argues that Victorio Codovilla of Argentina who, "in spite of his limited political abilities, controlled the whole movement as head of the Latin American Bureau;" Luis Carlos Prestes of Brazil, "who rose from a leader of the *Tenentes* revolt in the 1920s to become undisputed leader of the CP . . . until 1980;" and Lombardo Toledano of Mexico, "for many years the CP `front man' in the Latin American Trade Union movement, were essential elements in the Stalinization of the Latin American communist movement." Munck, pp. 11-13. See also Alexander, pp. 18-44.

[42]Munck, p. 14.

large-scale industries.[43] This policy was endorsed by the Conference of Latin American Communist Parties, meeting in Buenos Aires in June 1929, in a report by Humbert Droz entitled "The Struggle Against Imperialism and Problems of the Tactics of the Communist Parties of Latin America." Robert J. Alexander argues that this era of extreme communist isolation from other left-wing and working-class groups, was fully experienced by Latin American Communism, and led communist parties to oppose left-leaning nationalist governments, labeling them fascist, quasi-fascist or instruments of Yankee imperialism.[44]

The extreme isolation of the 1929-1935 period was followed by the almost equally extreme collaboration of the Popular Front period (1935-1945), which was ushered

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[43]The working class in Latin America at the time was composed largely of independent artisans; small workshops predominated over the few large factories. Nevertheless, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico in particular had developed a relatively solid trade union movement, into which the Profintern (The Red International of Labor Unions--RILU) began to make inroads. Munck, p. 14.

[44]Alexander argues that "this period was perhaps more appealing than some others to the Latin American temperament and state of political organization. The Latin American tradition of violent revolution made the extremism [of the period] more acceptable than it was in countries with stable political systems such as the United States and Great Britain" (Alexander, pp. 21-22). See also Luis E. Aguilar, ed., Marxism in Latin America, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), pp. 20-27.

in at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935. It was argued at the Seventh Congress that

> many of our comrades in Latin America have characterized nearly all the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties as fascists, thus hindering the establishment of an anti-Fascist Popular Front.[45]

During this period Latin American Communist sought alliances with Socialist or left-wing nationalist parties which represented the reformist, moderate left. The Communist Party in Argentina held out its hand to the previously "social fascist" *Radicales*; the Brazilians offered the olive branch to dictator Getulio Vargas in spite of the fact he was holding their most prominent leaders in jail and had outlawed the party; the Chileans allied themselves with the Socialists; the Peruvians turned towards APRA; in Cuba the *Autenticos* were hailed as allies of the proletariat, but when rebuffed the Cuban Communists ultimately turned toward Colonel Fulgencio Batista.[46]

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[45]Quoted in Aguilar, p. 27. See also "The Situation of the Latin American Communist Parties in the Eve of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern," The Communist International 12 (May 20, 1935). Reprinted in Aguilar, pp. 152-157.

[46]Batista was anxious at that moment to become President through more or less honest elections, but he lacked any wide basis of popular support. Hence he was willing to make an alliance with the Communists, who he thought might gain him such support. As a result the Communist Party became legal, the Confederation of Workers of Cuba was established, and the Communists were put in control of it. This alliance long survived the

The Popular Front epoch marked the first period during which the Communist parties of Latin America really assumed political importance in the life of the hemisphere. It was during this period that non-Communist politicians in a number of countries were willing, for the first time, to enter into agreements and alliances with Communists, and that they began to acquire serious followings among the workers and intellectuals in the region. Alexander attributes the Communists' success during this period to a number of factors, including: the Communists' vociferous support for the Allied cause during World War II; the widespread admiration among the politically conscious Latin Americans for the struggle which the Russians put up against the Nazi invaders; and the Communists' leading role in organizing committees for the support of the allies.[47]

During this period, the Communists dispensed with talk of revolution and dictatorship. Similarly, Communist "anti-imperialism" was forgotten during these years.

> When Communists spoke of "imperialism" it was only the Axis brand to which they were referring. They attacked those who still insisted on speaking

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Popular Front period. Alexander, p. 22. See also Aguilar, pp. 28-34 and Munck, pp. 18-21.

[47]Alexander, p. 25.

> about British or American imperialism as saboteurs of the war effort. They discouraged all strikes and other activities against American and British-owned firms.[48]

As a result, the Communists were able to develop friendly relations with a number of erstwhile enemies. Latin American Communists began to work with anti-fascist Catholic groups, dictators like Batista in Cuba and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic (although the Communist-Trujillo relationship was extremely short-lived), managers of local American and British-owned enterprises, and local allied diplomatic personnel. These new relationships increased the importance of Latin American Communists, so that by 1946 they were at the zenith of their power and influence.[49]

After World War II however, Latin American Communists suffered severe defeats in virtually every country in the hemisphere. The reasons for these setbacks are numerous and interrelated. First, with the end of World War II Latin American Communist parties rejected the "Browder deviation," as the previous

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[48]Ibid., p. 26.

[49]Their parties were legal or at least tolerated in virtually every country in the hemisphere. They had members of Congress in Cuba, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, and members of lesser legislative bodies in several other countries. In the latter months of 1941 they had their members in the Chilean Cabinet, and seemed well on the way to achieving the first Communist government of the hemisphere in that country. Alexander, p. 27.

emphasis on conciliation with capitalism was called due to its association with the United States Communist leader Earl Browder, and instead marshaled their propaganda against United States imperialism and in favor of international peace and the neutralization of Latin America. According to Rodney Arismendi, one of the most outstanding post-World War II theoreticians of communism in Latin America:

> In spite of the fact that historicalcircumstances led the peoples of Latin America, in their determination to save themselves from Nazi aggression, to collaborate closely with the Roosevelt government . . . this particular instance does not justify the generalconcept of Pan-Americanism, based as it is on supposed historical ties, as postulated by the obliging lawyers of imperialism. There is a fundamental incompatibility between American monopolies and the basic tendencies of national sovereignty and liberty of the Latin American countries. These represent two conflicting, in factirreconcilably antagonistic, trends in contemporary historical development.[50]

Robert J. Alexander points out that this shift in the Communist line was not only an attack against the United States, but also against every government in the hemisphere which is friendly toward the United States.[51] Moreover, the shift in the Communist line helped sever Communist party relations with groups which

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[50]Rodney Arismendi,"*El Fin de la Guerra y el Nuevo Imperialismo Norteamericano*," in Aguilar, pp. 182-185.

[51]Alexander, p. 28.

had been more sympathetic with them when they were fighting the Nazis.

Second, Stalin dissolved the Comintern in 1943 as a "gesture of goodwill" toward the West and replaced it with the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform). In 1947 this body, "the highest organ of the international communist movement," gave Soviet blessing to the division of the world into "zones of influence."[52] Latin America was to be a "zone of influence" for the United States and the Soviet Union, and by extension Latin American Communist parties, were to take little interest in the revolutionary struggles going on there.[53] The Cominform line was that the Communist parties must struggle to ensure stable and prolonged peace and must "subordinate all their activities to this paramount task of the day."[54] The Comintern always maintained that the major task of the proletariat in the oppressed countries was the national struggle against imperialism, however,

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[52]Munck, p. 23. See also Claudin, pp. 465-474.

[53]Stalin's associate Molotov had the following to say in reply to an accusation of Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe: "It is known that the United States of America is also pursuing a policy of strengthening its relations with neighboring countries--for instance Canada, Mexico, and also other countries of America--which is fully understandable" (quoted in Claudin, p. 472).

[54]Quoted in Claudin, p. 580.

> during the ambiguous pacifism of the 1950s, the [Latin American Communist parties] were to oppose discussion of the problem of national independence in the peace movement.[55]

Finally, as the Cold War developed, the United States urged Latin American states to take measures to control the expansion of communism. Such suggestions were taken to heart by various Latin American governments. After 1947, beginning with Brazil, Chile and Colombia, a number of Latin American nations broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. In 1947 the Brazilian Communist party was outlawed and its elected senators and deputies expelled from the Brazilian Congress. In 1948, the government of Chile declared the Communist Party to be illegal. In that same year, military coups took place in Peru and Venezuela and were followed by immediate anti-communist declarations. In Cuba, the democratic government of Grau San Martin began a successful offensive against Communist control of the CTC. In Argentina, Peron forced the Party into illegality, and in Colombia the conservative reaction reduced the Party's possibilities of action to their lowest point.[56]

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[55]Munck, p. 23.

[56]Aguilar, pp. 34-42.

Khrushchev and Brezhnev: 1953-1982

When Stalin died in 1953, the USSR had few diplomatic or economic relations with developing countries. By comparison, most of the developing countries maintained strong political and economic ties with the developed West.

> Forebodingly for the Kremlin, the United States had initiated preliminary contacts with many of the countries to bring them into U.S.-managed alliances directed against the Soviet Union. Additionally, China already considered itself a viable and credible alternative model for developing-world revolutions. Indeed, at the 1955 Bandung Conference of Non-Aligned States, China played a central and key role in proposing and adopting the"Five Principles of Coexistence." None of this redounded to Soviet advantage.[57]

However Nikita Khrushchev was to have a profound effect on Soviet foreign affairs and nowhere more than in relations with the Third World. Khrushchev argued that the situation in the Third World was "ripe" for socialism and that "progressive forces" capable of weakening capitalism were emerging. Khrushchev persuaded the Party that this was the opportune time for bold action and thus

> enabled the new nations to adopt policies whose effect was to alienate them from the West, thus carrying forward Lenin's injunction to attack the industrial heartland of capitalism by undermining its relationship with the non-western world.[58]

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[57]Papp, pp. 8-9.

[58]Rubinstein, p. 22.

Soviet attitudes toward the developing world during the late 1950s and early 1960s were optimistic. Khrushchev believed that Nehru, for example, was "more than just another bourgeois liberal politician--he was a true people's democrat" even though he "wasn't a communist."[59] Gamal Abdul Nasser and his government "had the national interest of its people at heart and therefore deserved our respect and support." Khrushchev found it "difficult to define the social-political goals" of Nasser and recognized the danger that Nasser's government could "be a bourgeois government" but the potential benefits were worth the risk, Khrushchev believed.[60] Developing country leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana were "interesting, intelligent, and highly educated," even though they did not have "a significantly clear perspective on political and social issues."[61] Leaders who regularly received Soviet praise included Ben Bella of Algeria, Sukarno of Indonesia, and Keita of Mali.

Indeed, some Soviet analysts considered conditions in the developing world to be so favorable for

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[59]Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), p. 306.

[60]Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), p. 432.

[61]Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, p. 335.

revolution and progressive change that national bourgeois leaders and their national democratic states might transcend their original class identities and move toward socialism. By December 1963, even Nikita Khrushchev accepted the thesis that this new type of developing-world leader, the revolutionary democrat, could lead his state into socialist oriented paths of development.[62] Fidel Castro's socialist revolution in Cuba was one of the factors that influenced the more optimistic Soviet observers to adopt this viewpoint, and many clearly believed that revolutionary democratic states were the wave of the future.[63]

Cognizant of important changes in the international system, and, according to Papp, less paranoid about the developing world than was Stalin, Khrushchev forged a foreign policy strategy inspired by Lenin's ideas. He modernized Leninist formulations on the colonial and national questions and operationalized them, in the process moving the Soviet Union into the mainstream of Third World developments.[64] Khrushchev argued that

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[62]Uri Ra'anan, "Moscow and the `Third World'," Problems of Communism 14 (January/February 1965): 22-31.

[63]Ibid. However, Ra'anan also points out that some Soviet analysts and policymakers disagreed and argued that only communists could lead the transition to socialism.

[64]Papp, pp. 8-10. See also Rubinstein, pp. 19-21. For a more detailed discussion of Khrushchev's foreign policy see Harry Hanak, "Foreign Policy," in Khrushchev

> the new period in world history which Lenin predicted has arrived, and the peoples of the East are playing an active part in deciding the destinies of the whole world, [they] are becoming a new mighty factor in international relations.[65]

Khrushchev called on these new nations "to build up an independent national economy and to raise the living standards of their peoples," and proclaimed that "today they need not go begging for up to date equipment to their former oppressors. They can get it in the socialist countries without assuming any political or military commitments."[66] Khrushchev proclaimed that a "zone of peace" including socialist and non-socialist states had arisen in Europe, Africa and Asia. Moreover, Khrushchev "reconstructed" the national bourgeoisie in developing countries, arguing as had Lenin, that the socialist camp and the national bourgeoisie were once again allies.[67] Nonalignment was accorded new respectability, and the newly independent states were recognized as a powerful new force in the international arena.

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and Khrushchevism, ed. Martin McCauley (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 180-194.

[65]Nikita S. Khrushchev, Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Twentieth Party Congress, February 14, 1956, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), p. 26.

[66]Ibid., p. 27.

[67]Papp, p. 10.

These changes were added to when, in 1960, the USSR hosted the Meeting of World Communist and Workers' Parties. Eighty-one parties attended and considered a variety of issues that confronted the international Communist and Workers' movement. The Soviets posited that in developing countries "all patriotic forces," including that sector of the national bourgeoisie "not connected with imperialist circles," should combine to create a "united national democratic front" that would be anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist. Khrushchev described these national liberation movements in developing countries as second in historical importance "only to the formation of the world socialist system."[68]

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[68]See "Statement of the Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties, November 1960," World Marxist Review 3 (December 1960): 4-25; and Nikita Khrushchev, "For New Victories of the World Communist Movement," World Marxist Review 4 (January 1961): 3-28.

Papp argues that the Soviet position on the national bourgeoisie masked major disputes between China and the Soviet Union over the ability of this group to lead national democratic states toward socialism and over the wisdom of fomenting communist revolutions in the developing world. According to the Chinese, the national bourgeoisie were not sufficiently revolutionary and trustworthy, and therefore communist-led revolution should be pursued throughout the developing world. To Khrushchev and his supporters, however, the national bourgeoisie did have sufficient revolutionary credentials and could move toward socialism with Soviet support.

Papp posits that Khrushchev's position was not universally accepted within the CPSU, and that a running debate over who should lead revolution in the developing world took place in two prominent Soviet journals (Aziya i Afrika Segodnya and Narody Azii i Afriki). See Papp, pp. 10-11.

From the mid-1950s on, as part of a new diplomatic activism, Soviet officials began to establish a wide variety of contacts with liberation groups operating abroad. The principal connections were made through four networks: the United Nations and its many committees dealing with colonial issues; Third World intermediaries like Egypt's Nasser and Ghana's Nkrumah; Western European Communist Parties, especially the French and Italian which kept close ties to African movements; and Soviet sponsored cultural and scientific meetings, such as the Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Orientalists, held in Moscow in August 1960, the frequent gatherings of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and other Soviet Front Organizations, and the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University, established in Moscow in 1961.[69] However, Khrushchev moved cautiously.

> He did not make the grand gesture that would have brought the USSR instant acclaim in Third World circles: he failed to make Moscow the first power to grant diplomatic recognition to ripening independence movements such as the Algerian Front de LiberationNationale (FLN). Nor was he freer with arms or funds in amounts that would have had an impact. Like Stalin,Khrushchev championed anti-colonialism and inveighed against imperialism, but did little. In no instance was he important to any liberation struggle. His bark lacked bite.[70]

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[69]Rubinstein, p. 86.

[70]Ibid.

What Khrushchev did was pursue a highly visible anti-colonialist campaign in the United Nations, one which placed the Soviet Union in sharp contrast with the Western powers and enhanced Moscow's prestige. Yet while supporting radical Afro-Asian resolutions calling for an end to colonialism, the Soviet Union shied away from demands for direct intervention by the United Nations Security Council.

To understand why Khrushchev's "bark lacked bite" when it came to Soviet support for national liberation movements seeking independence, one must recognize that according to Soviet sources, the world revolutionary process consists of three distinct streams. The most important stream is the socialist commonwealth of nations. It is headed by the Soviet Union and includes all countries of "developed socialism." The second stream is the international Communist and Workers' movement, made up of all Marxist-Leninist parties as well as non-Marxist parties sympathetic to the concepts of scientific socialism; the CPSU heads the second stream. The third stream is the "national liberation movement."[71]

One must also examine the various foreign policy goals the USSR was pursuing at the time. While aiding socialist or anti-Western movements in the Third World

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[71]See Papp for a discussion of these issues.

was a valued goal of the Soviets under Khrushchev, it was clearly subordinate to others. First, Soviet foreign policy under Khrushchev stressed improving relations and "peaceful coexistence" with the West. Rubinstein argues that Khrushchev moved cautiously in Africa "for fear of angering France and compromising the prospects of a Franco-Soviet rapprochement."[72] Similarly, Khrushchev's refusal to give Fidel Castro an iron-clad guarantee to defend Cuba from the United States suggests the greater importance given to U.S.-Soviet relations.[73] Interestingly, in an attempt to reconcile Soviet concern for peaceful coexistence with Soviet assistance of national liberation movements, Khrushchev, in a major speech on January 6, 1961 at a meeting of Party Organizations of the Higher Party School, The Academy of Social Sciences and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU's Central Committee, identified four general categories of war: world wars, which would be nuclear and involve the superpowers; local wars, which are limited wars fought by an imperialist power against a Third World country, or between two capitalist countries; wars of national liberation, which are struggles for independence from

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[72]Rubinstein, p. 86.

[73]See Cole Blasier, The Giant's Rival, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

foreign rule; and popular uprisings, which are internal struggles pitting "progressive" groups against "reactionary" groups tied to the imperialist camp.[74] It was argued that wars of national liberation, unlike local wars, could not escalate to world war, thus leaving the Soviet Union "free to help colonial peoples fight against the yoke of imperialism [and] support liberation movements and still contend they were adhering to a policy of peaceful coexistence."[75]

Similarly, the Soviet's concern with restoring some unity in the communist world and reasserting Moscow's leadership over the world communist movement, and thus counter Mao's challenge to Moscow's authority, led the Soviets to provide support to bourgeois-nationalist leaders in the Third World. As Khrushchev's quarrel with Mao worsened, each side felt impelled to stake out "correct" doctrinal positions on the Third World,

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[74]Stephen P. Gilbert argues that the difference between a local war and a war of national liberation is a political one. "In short, recourse to war by Western powers or their allies is condemned as local-limited war; recourse to arms by the newly-independent or `colonial' peoples, or by communist states or guerrilla forces in opposition to Western or Western-oriented regimes, ordinarily receives Soviet approval as a war of liberation. The same war may be labeled a war of liberation by the Soviets when referring to the belligerent that the USSR supports, but may be classified as a local-limited war when reference is made to the Western-oriented combatant" (Stephen P. Gilbert, "Wars of Liberation and Soviet Military Policy," Orbis 10 [Fall 1966]: 843).

[75]Rubinstein, p. 89.

including attitudes toward liberation struggles. The Soviet position was that the anti-imperialist orientation of many new nations and liberation movements was substantial and sufficient to bind them to the socialist camp, and their opposition to colonialism and imperialism justified Soviet assistance and friendship. Moreover, it was argued that the Chinese had woefully underestimated the importance of bourgeois-nationalist movements and what they had already achieved politically in breaking with imperialism by stressing their non-socialist character.

All in all, Khrushchev's policy toward national liberation movements was one of calculated caution,[76] and when Khrushchev was deposed in October 1964, the Soviet Union was only on the periphery of national liberation struggles, in marked contrast to its expanding relationships with Third World governments. "Courtship of anti-American regimes, not involvement in the efforts of non-ruling revolutionary movements, dominated Soviet policy in the Third World."[77]

Rubinstein argues that 1953 was a key year for Moscow in its relations with the Third World, as the

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[76]Rubinstein argues this needs to be emphasized given the very different interpretation of Soviet desires and actions held by the Kennedy administration at the time. See Rubinstein, pp. 91-95.

[77]Ibid., p. 95.

change in leadership brought with it a readiness to explore new approaches to a changing Third World. In Washington, by contrast, the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower ushered in an administration determined to globalize containment and foist it on countries who neither felt threatened by Soviet attack nor saw anything emanating from the Soviet Union that necessitated alliance with the West.

> The driving force behind this policy was Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who sorely misread the mood in the new nations. By uncritically extending to the Third World a strategy designed for Europe and the Far East, he was guilty, much like Stalin, of a rigid and parochial application of a policy perfectly good for one place to an environment for which it was ill-suited. His success in creating military pacts in the Middle East and South Asia provided a boon to Moscow. . . . Khrushchev could not have accomplished as much so quickly in the mid-1950s without the inadvertent assistance of Dulles.[78]

Khrushchev's first priority was to improve diplomatic relations with countries on the USSR's southern border: Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan. The USSR's foreign economic assistance program made its debut in Afghanistan when, on January 27, 1954, Kabul and Moscow signed an agreement arranging for the construction of two large grain elevators, a bread baking plant, and a flour mill, and a Soviet credit of $3.5 million.[79]

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[78]Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[79]Ibid., p. 42.

Soon Moscow was looking beyond its southern tier neighbors to other Third World countries, as was evident from the reversal of its previous stand opposing all United Nations programs for helping less-developed countries on the grounds that they were dominated by Western nations and designed to perpetuate Western investments. "Moscow hoped to publicize the benefits of Soviet aid and convince the LDCs that Soviet aid would not be used to subvert existing governments or promote communist activities within the recipient countries."[80]

Khrushchev's second objective was the exploitation of regional conflicts in the developing world. The aim was to gain tangible advantages in areas previously outside of Moscow's purview. In this quest for increased influence

> the USSR had the advantages of being a new major power of the Third World scene. It came with "clean hands," unburdened by a colonialist past in the Arab world, Southern Asia, Africa and Latin America; its imperialist record toward Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan was ignored or claimed irrelevant by most LDCs. . . . [T]he Soviet Union arrived at the right moment. Its offers of assistance enabled nationalist leaderships to explore alternatives to reliance on the West; its commitment to "socialism" accorded nicely with the generally positive attitude toward "socialism" held by most of the founding fathers of the newly independent bourgeois - nationalist regimes; and its immediate aims

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[80]Ibid.

did not conflict with those of prospective recipients of aid.[81]

By the early 1960s the USSR had aid relationships with twenty-five Third World countries. More than $4 billion of the approximately $6 billion in credits was allocated for economic assistance and the rest for military purchases.[82] When Khrushchev was deposed in October 1964 the Kremlin could look back on a decade of accomplishment in the Third World: better relations than ever before with important tier countries (Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan), including their recognition that economic assistance and political normalization depended on prohibiting the emplacement of U.S. missiles on their territory; diplomatic ties with all nonaligned countries; insinuation of a presence in the regional politics of key areas; expanded economic ties; high-visibility development projects in countries such as India, Egypt, and Afghanistan, which stimulated the interest of other countries; deference of the LDCs to Soviet policy positions on issues, such as disarmament, European security, and Eastern Europe, that were not of central concern to them; and a narrowing of U.S. options. Rubinstein sums this period up by calling its

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[81]Ibid., p. 46.

[82]Ibid.

accomplishments "an impressive list for so short a period and so limited an involvement."[83]

Liberation struggles came to the forefront of international attention in the mid-1960s. Within six months after Khrushchev's deposal, the new Kremlin leadership, headed by Leonid Brezhnev and Aleksei Kosygin, was drawn deeply into the liberation struggle in Vietnam. Pressed by considerations of intra-communist world politics to expand their support when the United States bombed North Vietnam and landed the first major contingent of combat troops in South Vietnam in March 1965, the Soviet Union promised to strengthen the military capability of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and enable the Hanoi government to repel the imperialists. Similarly, they recognized the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam as the sole representative of the people of South Vietnam.

> While the United States waged war against a communist country, Brezhnev and Kosygin were not willing to stand idly by and leave the Chinese a clear field in which to challenge Soviet leadership of the bloc and tarnish Soviet prestige abroad.[84]

While at the Twenty Third Congress of the CPSU, Brezhnev declared that "there can be no peaceful

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[83]Ibid., p. 47; see also Hosmer and Wolfe.

[84]Rubinstein, p. 96. The author argues further that competition with China spurred the USSR's assistance to liberation struggles in Arab East and Southern Africa as well.

coexistence when it comes to the internal processes of the national liberation struggle," behind the scenes Soviet writers were once again faced with the task of squaring theory with reality.[85] Khrushchev's shift of Soviet policy away from orthodox Communists toward bourgeois nationalists greatly improved Soviet influence and prestige in the Third World; however, there were critical weaknesses in the policy as well. First, many of Moscow's Khrushchev-era allies proved highly unstable and vulnerable to sudden shifts in political fortunes. As the rule of many Soviet allies tended to be highly personalistic, the removal or defection of a single leader undermined the entire Soviet position in the nation concerned. Pro-Soviet governments were overthrown by military coups in Indonesia and Algeria (1965), Ghana (1966), and Mali (1968). Second, even when Soviet friends stayed in power, they tended to be highly unpredictable and often uncooperative with Soviet aims despite large inflows of Soviet military assistance.[86] As Francis Fukuyama says,

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[85]Quoted in Ibid., p. 97.

[86]Rubinstein points out that since the mid-1960s the USSR has shifted its commitments away from economic assistance to military assistance. Rubinstein, pp. 54-57. See also Melvin A. Goodman, "The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Military Dimension," in The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades, eds. Francis Fukuyama and Andrzej Korbonski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 46-66, for a discussion of the difficulties the Soviet Union has experienced in

> it would be impossible to establish all the instances of a Soviet client acting contrary to Moscow's wishes; every study of Soviet dealings with particular countries or regimes lists several. . . . With the sole exception of Cuba, not a single bourgeois nationalist ally of the Khrushchev era adopted orthodox Marxism-Leninism as its governing ideology. The worse case, from the Soviet standpoint, was Egypt, the centerpiece of Soviet Third World policy in the fifties and sixties and the recipient of a total of over $4 billion in aid, which between 1972 and 1976 defected altogether to the Western camp.[87]

Third, arms transfer and economic aid proved to be an extremely poor source of leverage over intractable clients.[88]

As the 1960s progressed, Khrushchev-era optimism about the likelihood of quick transition to socialism along the non-capitalist path of development gave way to increasing skepticism about the reliability of non-communist Third World states. The problem, according to Soviet theorist Rostislav Ul'yanovskiy, was that in too many Third World nations progressive forces

> failed to create a revolutionary-democratic organization which would ensure the reliability of truly revolutionary-democratic accomplishments . . . [relying instead] on a

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transforming military aid into political and diplomatic influence with its allies in the Third World.

[87]Francis Fukuyama, "Soviet Strategy in the Third World," in Fukuyama and Korbonski, p. 27.

[88]Interestingly, these points are made by two authors of starkly different political and ideological persuasion. See Fukuyama, pp. 28-29, and Fred Halliday, <u>From Kabul to Managua: Soviet-American Relations in the 1980s</u>, (New York: Pantheon, 1989), pp. 97-111.

> national leader who, in turn, relied on the army, the security organ, his clan or his tribe.[89]

These changed perceptions were accompanied by a reassessment of Soviet economic involvement in the Third World and a new policy which promoted parties or national liberation movements that explicitly based themselves on Marxist-Leninist ideology.[90] While not abandoning non-Marxist, bourgeois-nationalists, in nations where no obvious Marxist-Leninist alternative existed (Syria, India, Iraq, and Libya in the 1970s), Soviet theoreticians recognized that, all things being equal, a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist state would be most likely to cooperate reliably with the Soviet bloc.

In the 1970s there was a great upsurge in Soviet writings on vanguard parties and their importance to the revolutionary development of Third World states.[91]

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[89]Quoted in Fukuyama, p. 30.

[90]Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[91]These writings made it clear that the Soviets had expanded the definition of a vanguard party. Prior to the late 1970s, the Soviet notion of a vanguard party followed conventional Leninist lines--such a party had to be an organization of tested cadres with its lower levels closely subordinated to its upper ones, it also had to have deep roots in the masses. With the growing fragmentation of the communist movement, Moscow posited that a true vanguard party must also accept the Soviet version of scientific-socialism. Thus self-classification as a Marxist-Leninist entity would not qualify a body as a vanguard party unless it met Soviet standards as well. See David E. Albright, "Vanguard Parties in the Third World," in The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World, ed. Walter Laqueur (New

Vanguard parties were seen as a means of stabilizing revolutionary power and institutionalizing the socialist orientation of a government, permitting it to survive the whims or the passing of individual Third World leaders. Vanguard parties were seen as one way of making local revolutions in some sense irreversible.[92]

Centralization of power in the hands of a reliable political organization was particularly important given Moscow's declining ability to assist and control the economic development of its client states. As Elizabeth Valkenier points out Soviet development economists in the 1970s increasingly concluded that the traditional socialist formula for economic development, calling for rapid nationalization of foreign and private property and isolation of the economic system from the world capitalist economy, was inadequate. Developing countries would actually benefit from a more gradual transition to socialism similar to that followed during the period of the New Economic Policy in the USSR during the 1920s.[93] Francis Fukuyama posits that

> whatever the Soviet leadership thought of this argument on its merits, the notion provided a convenient justification for the Kremlin's

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York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 208-225.

[92]Ibid. and Fukuyama, p. 32.

[93]Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, The Soviet Union and the Third World: An Economic Bind, (New York: Praeger, 1983).

> increasing reluctance to foot the bill for large-scale economic development. . . . [Moreover the] existence of a strong vanguard party potentially allows Moscow to have its cake and eat it too, with the West assisting the economic development of Marxist-Leninist states that remain in political terms closely aligned with the USSR.[94]

Beginning in the early 1970s Soviet theory and practice converged, as the USSR undertook the promotion of Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Parties during the intense period of Third World activism. Soviet writers were quite explicit about their growing list of allies in the Third World and spoke of a second generation of states very different from those of the Khrushchev era. The 1984 edition of the World Communist Movement, a handbook of official Soviet positions concerning the worldwide revolutionary process, states:

> It is impossible to speak of two groups of countries of a socialist orientation and of a second generation of revolutionary democrats, who are closer to scientific socialism. The distinctiveness of the new groups of countries of a socialist orientation (Algeria, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and others) is that they have to build the economy virtually from scratch, and that a working class is springing up in them together with industry. The political regimes of this group of countries are distinguished by great clarity of class positions. A process in which new revolutionary parties are coming into being, parties which at their congresses have declared their adoption of Marxist-Leninist ideology, is under way there. It is these

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[94]Fukuyama, p. 33.

parties which are heading the revolutionary development.[95]

The Soviets and their allies did not, of course, abandon their ties with the earlier generation of non-Marxist clients such as Syria, Libya or India. The Soviets had invested considerable prestige in these countries, which were in any case highly important to Moscow by virtue of their size, wealth or geostrategic position. Being relatively stable states, they did not give the Soviets the option of encouraging alternative, Marxist-Leninist leaderships. Nevertheless, where the Soviets had a choice, their behavior clearly indicated a preference for national liberation organizations or parties proclaiming adherence to orthodox scientific socialism.[96]

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[95]Quoted in Ibid. Fukuyama argues that the list of second generation Marxist-Leninist clients is actually longer than the one give here. "Between 1954 and 1984 the number of regimes proclaiming scientific socialism as their guiding ideology climbed from three (North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba) to sixteen (those three plus Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the PDRY, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Laos, Kampuchea, Madagascar, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Benin, and the People's Republic of Congo). In addition, Marxist-Leninists were in power in Grenada until the American invasion in October 1983, and there were reports of a Communist coup attempt in Iraq in 1977" (Fukuyama, p. 33). He explains this proliferation of Soviet allies in terms of an expansionistic Soviet foreign policy, aided by its socialist allies--particularly Cuba and East Germany. Others, including Halliday, explained these developments in terms of autonomous sociopolitical phenomena.

[96]Fukuyama, pp. 34-35; Albright, pp. 213-225.

With the exception of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, none of the second-generation clients began their existence as orthodox communist parties but evolved out of a variety of national liberation fronts or military juntas that only later proclaimed their adherence to Marxism-Leninism. In these cases, the Soviets then encouraged these groups, once in power, to reorganize themselves as formal Leninist vanguard parties. This occurred in Mozambique (February 1977), Angola (December 1977), the PDRY (October 1978), and Ethiopia (September 1984).

Latin American Communism 1953-1985
From Castro to the Sandinistas

After Stalin's death in March 1953, and with the enunciation of Khrushchev's new doctrine of "peaceful coexistence," there emerged a new period of search for alliances by the Latin American Communist parties. They offered their support to the democratic governments that succeeded some of the fallen dictatorships, as in Argentina with Arturo Frondizi and in Brazil with Kubitshek.[97] These moves coincided with Khrushchev's attempt to establish friendly relations with progressive

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[97]See Edme Dominguez, "The Latin American Communist Movement: Realities and Relations with the Soviet Union," in The USSR and Latin America: A Developing Relationship, ed. Eusebio Mujal-Leon (Boston: Unwin Hymer, 1989), p. 126. See also Munck, pp. 25-29 for a discussion of the Brazilian Communist Party.

regimes in Third World countries.[98] They also coincided with a general pessimism, or "geographic fatalism," about the prospects for Communist revolution in Latin America. Khrushchev's notion of a "zone of peace" in the Third World--comprised on newly independent nations seeking to break from the imperialism camp--did not include Latin America, in part because most Latin American nations had been independent since the nineteenth century and in part because of the area's higher level of economic development than that of Africa and Asia. Moreover, Moscow's primary front organization for the Third World--the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization--by definition did not include the region.[99] The overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954 served to confirm the

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[98]At the Twenty-First Party Congress, Khrushchev declared that "those countries that have gained their national independence need and will continue to need support from the socialist countries and from all the progressive forces. The Soviet Union [is] giving and will go on giving them aid" (quoted in Alberto Daniel Faleroni, "Soviet Strategy in Latin America," in The Soviet Union and Latin America, eds. J. Gregory Oswald and Anthony J. Strover [New York: Praeger, 1970], p. 41).

[99]Leon Goure and Morris Rothenberg, Soviet Penetration of Latin America, (Miami: University of Miami Center for Advanced International Studies, 1975), p. 1. See also Hough, pp. 169-177.

Soviet view of Latin America as an area where American power severely limited communist opportunities.[100]

Prior to the Cuban Revolution of January 1959, Nikita S. Khrushchev had focused his attention on the newly independent, ex-colonial countries of Asia and Africa. In fact Castro's 26 of July Movement, defeated in its initial assault on the Moncada Army barracks in July 1953 and returned to Cuba as a guerrilla movement in December 1956, received no active Soviet backing. Nor did it receive support from the Cuban Communists through the Popular Socialist Party. Initially the Soviets saw Castro as unlikely to succeed, since they believed that sooner or later he would either be decimated by the United States or else accommodate to the imperialists. As late as November 1958 Khrushchev observed in an interview that everyone remembered the fate of Guatemala and, even though the Cubans were heroic in their struggle, they were doomed to fail.[101]

Moreover, Castro's guerrilla struggle against Batista violated what the post-Stalin Soviet leadership believed was the proper way to achieve socialist revolution. The debate over the efficacy of armed

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[100]See Herbert S. Dinerstein, "Soviet Policy in Latin America," American Political Science Review 61 (March 1967): 80.

[101]Herbert S. Dinerstein, The Making of a Missile Crisis: October 1962, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 35.

struggle or political participation in achieving socialism goes back to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, at which Khrushchev argued

> In present-day conditions the working class in many capitalist countries . . . united around itself the working peasantry, the intellectuals and all the patriotic forces . . . has an opportunity to defeat the reactionary anti-popular forces, to win a firm majority in parliament and to turn the parliament from an agency of bourgeois democracy into an instrument of the genuinely popular will. [This] would create conditions for the working class of many capitalist and formerly colonial countries to make fundamental social changes. Of course, in those countries where capitalism is still strong, where it possesses a tremendous military and police machine, a serious resistance by reactionary forces is inevitable. The transition to socialism in these countries will take place amid sharp revolutionary class struggle.[102]

Cole Blasier argues that since 1956 the Soviet line has been clear, "what changes over the years is emphasis and tone." The Soviet position is that

> 1) The local Communist parties may take either the armed or non-armed road, or some combination thereof. Local conditions determine which road is followed.
> 2) Communists should take the non-armed road if feasible. If armed opposition appears, the Communists will probably have to resort to arms to defend the Revolution.[103]

Castro's victory, his unexpected shift to Marxism-Leninism, and his ability to defy the United States and to incorporate Cuba into full membership in the Soviet-led "community of socialist states," constituted in

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[102]Current Digest of the Soviet Press 3 (March 1951): 12.

[103]Blasier, p. 76.

Moscow's view a momentous break in U.S. dominance of Latin America and appeared to open the way for an upsurge of pressures for political, social and economic change on the continent. Khrushchev, speaking in the wake of Castro's success in repelling the Bay of Pigs invasion, went so far as to declare the Monroe Doctrine dead. "The only thing left to do with the Monroe Doctrine is to bury it just as you would bury anything dead so it will not poison the air."[104] Similarly the tone of major programmatic speeches and documents emanating from Moscow from 1960 onwards reflected a steady increase in Soviet confidence.

> The 1960 Declaration of 81 Communist Parties asserted that "the victory of the Cuban Revolution has powerfully stimulated the struggle of the Latin American peoples for complete national independence" and opened up "a front of active struggle against imperialism" in that region. At the 23rd Congress of the Communist Part of the Soviet Union in March 1966, Brezhnev made "special mention" of the "courageous liberation struggle" in Latin America and declared that "today in every country in that continent, the people are waging a struggle against U.S. imperialism and its accomplices." [Similarly] the main document adopted by the International Communist Conference on June 17, 1969 declared that not only had Cuba established the first socialist state on the American continent but that "in this part of the world, militant, democratic, anti-imperialist movements and

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[104]Quoted in T. S. Cheston and B. Loeffke, Aspects of Soviet Policy Toward Latin America, (New York: MSS Information Corporation, 1974), p. 63.

> revolutionary processes are developing which pave the way to socialism."[105]

This hopeful rhetoric notwithstanding, the early and mid-1960s were years of disagreement between the Cuban leadership--Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara--and Moscow over the question of how best to bring revolution to Latin America.[106] Castro and Guevara advocated the export of guerrilla-style revolution while the Soviets urged restraint. For Moscow, Castro's eagerness to export revolution and the presence of revolution-prone leftists in Latin America represented a real dilemma.

> On the one hand, Moscow believed that the Cuban experience was *sui generis*, and that less militant tactics were apt to prove more useful elsewhere on the continent. On the other hand, Moscow was interested in maintaining influence over these sundry groups [and making certain Castro would not edge] closer to Maoism . . . taking with him the entire gallimaufry of Castroist parties in Latin America.[107]

Hence, in late 1964, in what has come to be called the "Havana Compromise," Moscow gave its endorsement to the strategy of armed struggle, albeit in only five Latin

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[105]Goure and Rothenberg, p. 2. For similar statements see Faleroni, pp. 40-58.

[106]See Pedro Ramet and Fernando Lopez-Alvez, "Moscow and the Revolutionary Left in Latin America," Orbis 28 (Summer 1984): 344-346.

[107]Ibid. pp. 344-345.

American countries--Venezuela, Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay and Haiti.[108]

There is, however, little evidence of direct Soviet aid to advocates of armed struggle in this period, and despite Cuba's support for guerrillas in Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru and Nicaragua, Moscow preferred to pursue the normalization of diplomatic relations and trade--even with the anti-Castro governments of Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela.[109] Moscow, in effect, denied that Latin America was ripe for revolution and, together with its loyal communist parties, insisted on the possibility of a peaceful path to power. Pravda criticized Castro repeatedly for "petit bourgeois revolutionism" and Castro replied in kind, assailing Moscow, in a 1967 speech, for its policy of Detente and lashing out at the Latin American Communist Parties loyal to Moscow.[110]

By the late 1960s the armed struggle in Venezuela had evaporated, the Peruvian guerrillas had been

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[108]See Blasier, pp. 87-92.

[109]Ramet and Lopez-Alvez, p. 345. See also Dinerstein, "Soviet Policy in Latin America," p. 80; W. Raymond Duncan, "Soviet Interests in Latin America: New Opportunities and Old Constraints," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 26 (May 1984): 165-168; and, Edward Gonzalez, Cuba Under Castro: The Limits of Charisma, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 137.

[110]Ramet and Lopez-Alvez, p. 346.

destroyed, the Colombian guerrilla movement had withered away, and the Brazilian leftist urban insurgency had collapsed.[111] These developments had little impact on Moscow as it had refused to help these insurgents. Indeed, at the CPSU's Twenty-Third Congress in 1966, the policy of incorporating Latin American Communist parties into wide political fronts was reasserted. This policy of fronts was, in turn, approved by the last Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969.[112] Moscow blamed setbacks in several countries on "ultraleftists" who, according to Pravda,

> have completely discarded the Marxist-Leninist theory of the socialist revolution [since] . . . in their opinion, armed struggle can be called into being artificially at any time in any country, regardless of conditions. [T]hese leftist schismatic groups . . . [have] nothing in common with communism and [coincide] completely with the platform of the Trotskyite groups.[113]

Soviet optimism was stimulated in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the rise of regimes in Peru, Panama, Ecuador and Honduras which were favorably inclined

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[111]See Benedict Cross, "Marxism in Venezuela," Problems of Communism 22 (November/December 1973): 51-71; and Riordan Roett, "Brazilian Communism: A History of Failure," Problems of Communism 25 (January/February 1976): 77-81.

[112]See Augusto Varas, "Ideology and Politics in Latin American-USSR Relations," Problems of Communism 33 (January/February 1984): 38-39.

[113]Pravda, November 20, 1968. Quoted in Ramet and Lopez-Alvez, p. 346.

toward cooperation with the Soviet Union. Moreover, the election of Salvador Allende as president of Chile in autumn 1970 seemed to vindicate Brezhnev's gradualist policy in Latin America. Augusto Varas argues that despite the sparse economic support it provided to Allende, the USSR saw in Chile's experience a model that the Third World could follow without risking a military confrontation with the United States.

> The Chilean case seemed to show that, even in an area so sensitive for U.S. interests, the USSR could gain regional positions befitting both its revolutionary expectations and its limited capacity for providing financial or other economic assistance--and all without adverse effects on Moscow's relations with Washington.[114]

In an article for the CPSU organ Kommunist, Boris Ponomarev, head of the International Department of the Central Committee Secretariat, argued that

> the victory of the National Unity Bloc in Chile, the progressive changes in Peru and the serious successes achieved by the revolutionary struggle in Uruguay and several other countries lead us to believe that the revolutionary process here is continuing to develop at a pace faster than in other parts of the non-socialist world. This is truly a continent in upheaval.[115]

Ponomarev drew several conclusions from Allende's accession, among them that communist collaboration with socialists in electoral coalitions can produce electoral

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[114]Varas, p. 42.

[115]"Characteristics of the Revolutionary Process in Latin America," in Cheston and Loeffke, p. 31.

victory and that socialist-communist governments can take power by peaceful means.[116]

After the military coup that removed Allende from power, Moscow reasserted its position on gradualism and armed struggle. Its conclusions were stated by Ponomarev in mid-1974. According to Ponomarev, the Chilean reversal was attributable in part to the Popular Unity government's inability to "promptly change forms of struggle" in order to "repel the counter-revolutionary violence of the bourgeoisie." "The events in Chile," Ponomarev argued,

> are a reminder of the need to approach the issue of the peaceful, non-armed road to a victorious revolution from a correct Leninist position. The peaceful development of the revolution is guaranteed not only by an alignment of social forces under which the bourgeoisie would not venture to start a civil war, but by the constant preparedness of the revolutionary vanguard and the masses--in deed and not in words--to use the boldest means of struggle should the situation require it.[117]

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[116]Ibid., pp. 33-34. Cheston and Loeffke point out that while some Soviet experts in Moscow's Latin American Institute were optimistic about the prospects for Allende's program, others--especially those in the Institute of World Economic and International Relations--predicted it would be overthrown by a military coup. Cheston and Loeffke, p. 80.

[117]Boris Ponomarev, "The World Situation and the Revolutionary Process," World Marxist Review 17 (June 1974): 10-11. Similarly, Jerry Hough argues that the general consensus among Soviet observers of Latin America, in the wake of Allende's overthrow, was that the recourse to extra-legal means should not have been eschewed. See Jerry Hough, "The Evolving Soviet Debate on Latin America," Latin American Research Review 16 (Spring, 1981): 131-132.

Moreover, as Jerry Hough points out, some within the Soviet Union attributed Allende's fall to the Popular Unity government's inability to engage in greater political compromise, collaboration and alliances with parties representing the peasants and the middle strata, especially the Christian Democrats. According to Irina Zorina, a specialist on Chile, Allende's regime was excessively radical and thus was unable to create a democratic transformation whose substance and gradualness would have made it acceptable to the political center as well as the radicals.

> The participation of the Christian Democrats would not have hindered the enactment of the planned program of democratic transformation but could have achieved its full realization and made it really irreversible.[118]

In assessments of the lessons of Allende's Chile published in World Marxist Review, leading Chilean communists did not repudiate the validity of that road in the Chilean case by pointing out that Allende was elected to the Presidency and important strides forward were made during his tenure.[119] They also reaffirmed

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[118]Hough, The Struggle for the Third World, pp. 136-137.

[119]See V. Teitelboum, "Reflections on the 1,000 Days of Popular Unity Rule," World Marxist Review 20 (January 1977): 50-62; O. Milas, "Stages of the Struggle," World Marxist Review 20 (February 1977): 50-62; Hugo Fazio, "New Front of the Struggle Against Imperialism," World Marxist Review 20 (June 1977): 84-93; Gladys Marin, "Lessons of Chile: The Working Class and its Policy of Alliance," World Marxist Review 20 (July 1977): 63-75.

their policy of moderation and support for Allende against the ultra-leftist MIR party. The Chilean communists were equally emphatic that the Chilean experience does not and should not indicate that the peaceful and violent roads to revolution are mutually exclusive. Instead they emphasize that the Chilean experience shows the need at times to combine methods and be prepared to switch flexibly from one to another as circumstances dictate.[120]

By the mid-1970s (before 1979) Soviet leaders concerned with Latin America surveyed the continent and found no attractive opportunities to come to power either peacefully or by force, and Latin American Communist parties were counseled to orient themselves against U.S. imperialism in order to carry out "democratic" revolution--that is, the achievement of broad economic and political rights for the masses. Such a revolution, it was thought, would provide the Communist parties with the best opportunity of expanding their political influence while protecting them from the Right. "Democratic" revolution was perceived as a stage which would precede the socialist revolution.[121] This was to be achieved through the creation of "wide anti-

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[120]Luis Corvalan, "The Lessons of Chile," World Marxist Review 21 (January 1978): 34-48.

[121]See Blasier, p. 94. See also Hough, The Struggle for the Third World, pp. 136-140.

imperialist and democratic coalitions, popular fronts."[122]

In describing the strategies of the various Latin American Communist parties, the Soviet specialists divided the countries as of 1978 into three categories: 1) where patriotic circles of the armed forces are in power and are carrying out an anti-imperialist and democratic transformation (e.g. Peru, Panama); 2) where liberal reformist bourgeois circles are in power (e.g. Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Argentina); and 3) military dictatorships (e.g. Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Guatemala, Uruguay, Nicaragua, and Haiti).[123] In the first instance the Communist parties sought the widest possible alliance of "progressive" military, worker, and peasant forces and supported the "progressive" measures of the government, thereby seeking to promote the further transformation of society. In the countries with liberal reformist governments, communist strategy was

> to unite the democratic and patriotic forces, isolate the right and liquidate the threat of coups d'etat, [and] preserve and expand

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[122]M. F. Kudachkin, The Great October [Revolution] and the Communist Parties of Latin America, p. 80, quoted in Blasier, p. 94. Blasier argues that Kudachkin's work is the most authoritative treatment of the strategies of Latin American Communist parties in the late 1970s.

[123]Blasier, pp. 94-95.

> democratic freedoms and the social achievements of the people.[124]

In countries governed by military dictatorships the main task of communists is "to promote the formation of wide anti-dictatorial and anti-fascist fronts designed to overthrow reactionary regimes, establish citizens' rights, and achieve a matured socio-economic transformation" while also supporting revolutionary guerrilla movements wherever possible.[125]

With the victory of the Frente Sandinista in Nicaragua in July 1979, the policy of broad fronts and the peaceful road to socialism had to be rethought. The overthrow of Somoza and the seizure of power by the Nicaraguan guerrillas was a pleasant surprise for the Soviet Union in that the Sandinistas came to power without any direct support from the Soviets or the

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[124]Kudachkin, quoted in Ibid., p. 95.

[125]Ibid., p. 96 and Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, "Soviet Strategy and Policies in the Caribbean Basin," in Rift and Revolution: The Central American Imbroglio, ed. Howard J. Wiarda (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984), pp. 197-252.

Blasier posits that the list of military dictatorships falls into two categories: those with which the USSR has diplomatic relations and those with which it does not. Focusing on Brazil, in the former category, and Guatemala, in the latter, Blasier intimates that Communist parties in nations that have diplomatic relations with Moscow are more reformist--that is, they seek a freer political climate in which they can reorganize and broaden their political following--while parties in the latter group are more revolutionary. See Blasier, pp. 96-102.

Socialist Party of Nicaragua (PSN), thus showing how wrong the Moscow-sponsored strategy of the peaceful road had been. The PSN followed the prevailing conciliatory line that characterized pro-Soviet Latin American Communist parties at the time, repudiating armed struggle as "ultra-leftist" and "Castroite" extremism. Its policy toward the Frente Sandinista was one of self-restraint and caution.[126]

The Soviets were quick to draw conclusions from the Sandinista victory, and in 1980 the pages of América Latina "brightened noticeably as an aroused bureaucracy once again could see opportunities in the Americas."[127] Sergo Mikoyan, editor of América Latina, writing in the wake of "the gratifying surprise of Nicaragua--impossible to predict a year previously," argued that armed struggle has become the path of success in Central America.[128] Similarly, Boris Koval, in the March 1980 issue of América Latina, wrote

> the Nicaraguan experience has demolished the previous simplistic interpretation of guerrilla actions, confirmed the justice of many of Che Guevara's strategic principles,

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[126]See Ramet and Lopez-Alvez, p. 351; Edme Dominguez, pp. 134-136.

[127]Blasier, p. 100.

[128]Sergio Mikoyan, "*Las Particularidades de la Revolución en Nicaragua y sus Tareas desde el punto de Vista de la Teoría y la Práctica del Movimiento Librador*," América Latina, no. 3 (1980): 103.

> and crystallized his idea of creating a powerful popular guerrilla movement.[129]

In the same issue, N. Leonov underlined the conclusion that "the armed road . . . is the most promising in the specific conditions of most of the Latin American countries."[130]

In general, the lesson of the FSLN victory in Nicaragua for many communists, was that the communists should subordinate themselves to their one-time rivals, the radical nationalists, in order to create revolutionary coalitions capable of achieving guerrilla victory. As Blasier posits, the communists have learned that "if [they] can't beat these radical nationalists, it is better to join them."[131] Accordingly, the Communist Party of El Salvador, led by Shafik Jorge Handal, opted for armed struggle and swung into line behind the Popular Forces of Liberation Farabundo Marti (FMLN) in late 1979.[132] General Secretary Handal, not wanting to be outmaneuvered as was the PSN, said "Our decision is a bit late, but we're in time." The timing

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[129]Quoted in Robert S. Leiken, Soviet Strategy in Latin America, (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 34.

[130]Ibid.

[131]Blasier, p. 99.

[132]See Edme Dominguez, p. 136-138.

of the Party's action assured Handal a place on the coordinating committee leading the revolt.[133]

The degree to which the policy of Latin American Communists joining radical revolutionary fronts is applicable or desirable outside of Central America is contentious. A series of articles in World Marxist Review in 1982 intimate that Moscow viewed Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Paraguay as ripe for revolution.[134] However Blasier argues that Soviet policy had by no means given up the peaceful road. On the contrary, it remained the preferred strategy, however strategies were to be determined by "objective conditions" in the country concerned. As Blasier says,

> it is now possible to envisage at least three models of Communist strategy in Latin America, vis-a-vis old regimes: 1) Military dictatorships, type 1. There will be explicit or tacit collaboration with military dictatorships having important economic ties to the USSR and support for a civil-military solution. The Communist party will have limited opportunities to recruit, circulate publications, and compete in certain

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[133]See "Armed Struggle is the Only Road Left," Information Bulletin of the World Marxist Review, no. 14 (1980): 43-46.

[134]See Eduardo Viera, "The Political Climate is Changing," World Marxist Review 25 (January 1982): 64-67; Raul Vidal, "For the Chilean People's Freedom and Happiness," World Marxist Review 25 (February 1982): 39-40; "Latin America: Decade with a Hard Beginning," World Marxist Review 25 (March 1982): 19-25; and "Dramatic Stage in the History of a Continent," World Marxist Review 25 (May 1982): 15-23.

> elections. Example: Argentina before 1983. 2) Democratic reformist regimes. Communists will follow the peaceful road. They will accept the constitutional order, compete for votes and popular support, and collaborate closely with other legal leftist parties. Example: Venezuela. 3) Military dictatorships, type 2. There will be armed revolutionary opposition. Communists will collaborate with, and where possible participate in revolutionary leadership. . . . Example: El Salvador before 1982.[135]

Similar conclusions are reached by Rodney Arismendi, long-time leader of Uruguay's Communist party. He argues that the FSLN victory in Nicaragua does not invalidate the Chilean experience. On the contrary, the real possibilities of the peaceful road to socialism have increased despite the insurrectional triumph in Nicaragua.[136]

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[135]Blasier, p. 101.

[136]Rodney Arismendi, "*La Primavera Popular en Nicaragua*," Revista Internacional, August 1980: 30. Quoted in Munck, p. 130.

CHAPTER 3

GORBACHEV: PERESTROIKA AND FOREIGN POLICY NEW THINKING

In practice, Brezhnev's promotion of Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Parties had been a mixed blessing for the Soviet Union.

> On the one hand, such parties indeed cooperated closely with the Soviet bloc, signing friendship and cooperation treaties with Moscow, permitting relatively free air and naval access to the Soviet military, supporting sympathetic national liberation movements and participating in the socialist "collective security system," voting with the USSR in the United Nations, and so forth. On the other hand, these regimes have tended to be weak and narrowly based, lacking the broad nationalist legitimacy of the first generation of clients and heavily dependent on Soviet bloc support for their initial rise to power or their ability to remain in place, or both.[1]

A growing awareness of the problematic character of their recent Third World achievements, coupled with the increased tension and higher risk in the post-detente, Reagan administration era, the tenacity and costs of the Afghan problem, and serious domestic economic difficulties led the post-Brezhnev leadership to adopt a

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[1]Francis Fukuyama, "Soviet Strategy in the Third World," in The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades, eds. Francis Fukuyama and Andrzej Korbonski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 37.

"Soviet Union-first" position in its relations with the Third World.[2]

This "Soviet Union-first" orientation will be most clearly seen in Mikhail Gorbachev's foreign policy new thinking. As detailed below, Soviet new thinking in foreign policy reconsiders the character of national security in the nuclear era and posits that, since nuclear war cannot under any circumstances be won, national security must be achieved through both military and political means. Most important for the revolutionary Left in Latin America, new thinking also entails a revision of the concept of peaceful coexistence. With the rise to power of Gorbachev, peaceful coexistence is viewed less as a form of class struggle and more as a long-lasting condition of states with different social and political systems living together peacefully. Theorists of Soviet new thinking will posit further, that peaceful coexistence is made more imperative by the growing interdependence of international relations.

These positions have their roots in two interrelated developments: a Soviet economic crisis which could no longer be ignored; and the need to

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[2]See Ibid., p. 38; Fred Halliday, From Kabul to Managua, (New York: Pantheon, 1989), pp. 102-112; and, Galia Golan, "Moscow and Third World Liberation Movements: The Soviet Role," Journal of International Affairs 1 (January 1987): 303-324.

improve relations with the West. The Gorbachev leadership hopes that improved relations with the West will allow the Soviet Union to reduce its expenditures on military preparedness, focus more of its limited resources on the domestic economy, and to enjoy increased economic assistance from Western nations.

In their search for a *modus vivendi* with the United States, the Soviet Union under President Gorbachev has engaged in a policy of "strategic retreat" from the Third World. This policy is characterized by a lack of interest in winning new spheres of influence in the Third World, and by reconsidering relations with existing Third World allies. The Soviet Union's strategic retreat has been accompanied by a search for conflict resolution in the Third World, especially in areas where the USSR is in conflict with U.S. interests. In Latin America these developments have meant that the USSR has reconsidered its support to "anti-imperialist" and anti-American forces and has abandoned its confrontational attitude toward the West.[3]

Soviet Policy from Andropov to Gorbachev

Soviet theorists were the first to articulate the "Soviet Union-first" position; however with the ascent

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[3]Sergei Tagor, Perestroika and Soviet-Latin American Relations, (Washington DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Working Papers, 1991).

to power of Yuriy Andropov, the changes apparent earlier in the theoreticians' works began to emerge in leadership pronouncements. Beginning in 1981, a number of articles appeared which argued that by insuring the favorable conditions for building Communism in the USSR, and by defending the USSR's state interests, the position of world socialism is strengthened--the Soviet Union-first position.[4] Other articles, written by economists, implied that the economic problems of the Soviet bloc necessitated a rethinking of its overseas role, and invoked Lenin's statement that "the socialist countries would mainly influence the world revolutionary process through their economic successes."[5]

Fukuyama argues that skepticism about the viability of Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Parties is especially pronounced in the works of Karen Brutents, one of the two Central Committee International Department deputies responsible for the Third World. Brutents does not criticize Vanguard Parties explicitly, "but rather damns them with faint praise and shows a considerably greater interest in the non-Marxist parts of the Third World."[6]

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[4]See K. N. Brutents, "A Great Force of Modern Times," International Affairs, no. 2 (February 1981): 83-84; and A. Gromyko, "The Imperialist Threat To Africa," International Affairs, no. 7 (July 1981): 47-50.

[5]See Golan, p. 304 especially footnotes 5 and 6.

[6]Fukuyama, p. 40.

In a February 2, 1982 Pravda article Brutents argues that there exists a

> solid base for the Soviet Union's cooperation with liberated countries where capitalist relations are developing but which pursue a policy of defending and strengthening national sovereignty in politics and economics.[7]

Noting the "contradictions" which exist between the liberated nations and the imperialist states, he supports increased Soviet cooperation with nations like Brazil, Mexico, and India, suggesting that these nations, while not socialist-oriented nor governed by Vanguard Parties, provide the more fertile ground for Soviet policy. Brutents takes these themes even further in a February 1984 article in Kommunist in which he argues that

> the development of capitalist relations in the liberated countries does not nullify [the contradictions between them and the imperialist states] and does not directly contribute to consolidating the position of imperialism.[8]

Another source of skepticism about the inevitability of socialism in the Third World was Secretary General Yuriy Andropov himself, who in his June 1983 speech to the Central Committee echoed the line of many Soviet Third World theoreticians. "It is one thing to proclaim socialism as one's aim and quite

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[7]Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[8]Quoted in Ibid., p. 41.

another to build it. For this," Andropov claimed, "a certain level of productive forces, culture and social consciousness are needed." While sympathizing with states of a socialist orientation, he noted "the complexity of their position and the difficulties of their revolutionary development" and added that Soviet help would be "to the extent of our possibilities," but that ultimately these states had to rely on themselves.[9] This and other statements by Andropov suggest an unhappiness with the activist Third World policy that characterized the late Brezhnev years in general and a disillusionment with the socialist-oriented countries in particular.[10] The brief Chernenko period did witness some return in Soviet leadership pronouncements concerning national liberation movements and the need to assist them; however, Gorbachev has returned to Andropov's Soviet Union-first position.

The Gorbachevian Synthesis in Soviet Foreign Policy

Jerry Hough argues that the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev signals the start of a process whereby an older generation of leaders whose "mental world" is dominated by "old suspicions of Western ideas,

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[9]Quoted in Golan, p. 306.

[10]Fukuyama, p. 41.

influences, and markets" is being replaced by a younger generation with a different world view.

> Gorbachev's generation . . . took industrialization for granted and did not find urban life as upsetting as Stalin's and Brezhnev's generations did . . . Soviet youth since the 1950s have not seen Western ideas as satanic. Instead they have been fascinated by jazz and blue jeans and Western films and the thought of travel to the West.[11]

This new generation of leaders, led by Gorbachev and working in a context characterized by the growth of a middle class wanting change, an economic system that does not work well, and a political leadership increasingly frustrated by its lack of control over the bureaucracy, has argued in favor of modernizing the Soviet Union--moving it beyond the xenophobia and anti-Western posture characteristic of the nation since the Bolshevik Revolution--and opening it to the West. Since 1985, significant change in Soviet domestic politics has occurred. Similarly, "a revolution is under way in Soviet foreign policy greater than any in the postwar period," one which is "altering the assumptions by which the Soviets explain the functioning of international politics and from which they derive the

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[11]Jerry Hough, "The End of Russia's `Khomeini' Period," World Policy Journal 4 (Fall 1987): 588.

concepts underlying the deeper pattern of their actions."[12]

Gorbachev's actions and statements, particularly since the Twenty-Seventh Communist Party Congress in February/March 1986, suggest that his foreign policy perspectives differ fundamentally from those of his predecessors and are reshaping the ways in which Moscow deals with the outside world. A number of remarkable statements and actions--acceptance of the U.S. "zero option" on the INF issue, acceptance in several arms control fora of intrusive on-site verification, delinking the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan from the character of the Kabul government, the quick settlement of a decades-long boundary dispute with Sweden in January 1988, a major declaration of support for the United Nations and its peacekeeping activities, as well as the announced unilateral reduction of the Soviet armed forces by 500,000 men--suggest the scope of change in Soviet foreign policy attitudes under Gorbachev.

The "new political thinking" may be seen as a determined effort by the Gorbachev leadership to redefine the nature of the international environment

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[12]Robert Legvold, "The Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 68 (Winter 1988/89): 82.

facing the USSR.[13] The key elements of Soviet new thinking on foreign and security policy may be summarized as follows:

> 1) Nuclear war cannot under any circumstances be won; nuclear weapons therefore cannot be an instrument of policy.
> 2) Security cannot be obtained through military means alone; further, security in the nuclear age is mutual in character and must rely strongly on political means.
> 3) The rejection of nuclear deterrence as a durable guarantor of peace. Strategic parity, seen as an historical success for socialism, could cease to be a factor for stability in the face of an unregulated arms competition.
> 4) A revision of the concept of peaceful coexistence, which is seen less as a form of class struggle . . . and increasingly as a long-lasting condition in which states with different social and political systems will have to learn to live with each other for the indefinite future.
> 5) Increasing recognition of the multipolar and interdependent character of contemporary international relations.[14]

A number of factors and trends converged in the mid-1980s which led to the "Gorbachevian synthesis"

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[13]However it would be incorrect, argue some analysts, to assume that these new ideas were originated by the Gorbachev leadership. Many of the tenets of new thinking found "lucid expression by influential Soviet policy analysts in the pre-Gorbachev era." Indeed, according to Allen Lynch, "the emerging Soviet world view represents a synthesis of tendencies present in Soviet policy circles since the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956." See Allen Lynch, The Soviet Study of International Relations, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 19; see also William E. Odom, "How Far Can Reform Go?" Problems of Communism 36 (November/December 1987): 18-33.

[14]Lynch, p. xvii. See also Ye. Primakov, Pravda, July 10, 1987, p. 4 in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press 39 (1987): 1-4.

referred to as Soviet foreign policy new thinking. First, by the mid-1980s it was no longer possible for Soviet leaders to ignore the economic crisis facing the Soviet system. Gorbachev euphemistically called the situation a "pre-crisis phenomenon," meaning that the survival of socialism was probably not in danger, but the USSR's capacity to meet its domestic and foreign policy objectives was.

> At the ideological plenum of the Central Committee on February 18, 1988 Gorbachev said that, omitting the sales of oil abroad and of alcohol at home from calculations of growth as non-productive factors, "practically over four five-year plan periods there was no increase in the absolute increment of the national income, and it even began to decline in the early eighties." That is, for nearly a quarter century the Soviet economy suffered from progressively decreasing growth rates and then, in the early eighties, plunged into a defacto depression.[15]

The Gorbachev leadership has thus concluded, and has repeatedly made explicit to both foreign and domestic audiences, that the USSR's international relationships are not to be a distraction from the prime task of modernizing at home and wherever possible should be a positive inducement to it. Foreign Minister Eduard

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[15]Lynch, p. xxii. See also Abel Aganbegyan, "The Economics of Perestroika," International Affairs (London) 64 (Spring 1988): 179-185. Mr Aganbegyan is Head of the Economics Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences and chief economic adviser to Mikhail Gorbachev. In this article Mr. Aganbegyan describes the immediate and more long-term economic problems which have prompted the need for fundamental reorganization in the USSR.

Shevardnadze has announced that the main requirement of Soviet foreign policy

> is that our country should not bear additional expenditures in connection with the necessity of supporting our defense capability and the defense of our legitimate foreign policy interests. That means we must seek paths to the limitation and reduction of military rivalry, to the removal of confrontational moments in relations with other states, to the clamping down of conflicts and crises.[16]

Moreover, Gorbachev has been searching for structures of stability in critical areas like arms control so as to free scarce resources which can be devoted to the domestic economy.

> The need for such stability assumes double importance for Gorbachev, since instability in the USSR's foreign relations will affect not only the politics of resource allocation but the viability of Gorbachev's own political position, which assumes that far-reaching reform at home is consistent with the USSR's geopolitical presence abroad.[17]

Second, the Gorbachev leadership has concluded that a favorable international environment can be created only on a political basis with the leading industrial

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[16]Quoted in David Holloway, "Gorbachev's New Thinking," Foreign Affairs 68 (Winter 1988-89): 78.

[17]Lynch, p. xxiii. Interestingly, one of the ways Gorbachev has attempted to silence those critical of his arms control proposals and his other actions aimed at decreasing international militarization has been to argue that the fundamental nature of imperialism may be changing and that imperialism is restrained not merely by Soviet power but also by processes internal to imperialism. See Ibid, p. xxxiv; see also Margot Light, The Soviet Theory of International Relations, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988), pp. 310-311.

powers, especially the United States. According to Gorbachev,

> the character of present-day weapons leaves any country no hope of safeguarding itself solely with military and technical means, for example, by building a defense system, even the most peaceful one. The task of ensuring security is . . . a political problem, and it can only be resolved by political means. . . . In the context of relations between the USSR and the USA, security can only be mutual. . . . It is vital that all should feel equally secure, for the fears and anxieties of the nuclear age generate unpredictability in politics and concrete actions.[18]

Lynch argues that the Reagan administration's opposition to detente with the Soviet Union--a position shared by many on the political right and center--coupled with NATO's deployment of intermediate range nuclear missiles after November 1983, left the Soviet leadership with no other option but to attempt accommodation with the U.S.

> Traditional Soviet ways of countering U.S. pressure, i.e., by appealing over the heads of governments to populations and attempting to play both halves of NATO against the other, were clearly not working. What was to be done?[19]

With remarkable tenacity, Gorbachev sought to a achieve a *modus vivendi* with the United States. To

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[18]"The Political Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Party Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, February 25, 1986," in Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Toward a Better World, (New York: Richardson and Steirman, 1987), p. 159.

[19]Lynch, p. xxi.

achieve it, Soviet thinkers have revised the concept of peaceful coexistence.

> Key Soviet policy analysts now interpret peaceful coexistence less as a form of class struggle--the traditional Soviet viewpoint--and more as a long lasting condition in which states with different social and political systems will have to learn how to live with each other for the indefinite future.[20]

Peaceful coexistence is no longer considered a "breathing spell" in the international class struggle, but rather is seen as a permanent condition of international life which allows "global problems"--the arms race, ecological problems, Third World development--to be resolved on a collaborative basis.

"The time has come," Mikhail Gorbachev announced in the Political Report to the Twenty-Seventh Soviet Party Congress, "to realize thoroughly the harsh realities of our day: nuclear weapons harbor a hurricane which is capable of sweeping the human race from the face of the earth."[21] Similarly, Americanologist Georgi Arbatov argues that "in the past we did not realize, as we realize now, the limited possibilities of the use of military power," as a result, "our national security policy overemphasized military means."[22]

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[20]Ibid., p. xxiv.

[21]"The Political Report . . .," in Gorbachev, p. 157.

[22]Quoted in Legvold, p. 92.

Since the rise to power of Gorbachev there has been a major reexamination of security issues and an official confirmation by Gorbachev and the Soviet military that nuclear war cannot under any circumstances be won.[23] Security in the nuclear age is said to be mutual in character and, given the destructive potential of modern weapons, a common concern of all countries. Moreover, Soviet policy analysts and Gorbachev himself reject nuclear weapons as a durable guarantor of peace. They claim that even nuclear parity, which they consider a major historical achievement of socialism, could cease to be a determining factor for stability in the face of an unregulated arms competition between East and West.[24] Lynch argues that

> the promulgation of the Strategic Defense Initiative in March 1983 appears to have encouraged a reevaluation of the concept of military-nuclear parity (and by extension of defense sufficiency) by plausibly (to Soviet observers at the time) threatening the political significance of the USSR's accumulated investment in nuclear-charged

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[23]For a more detailed discussion of new thinking and Soviet security, nuclear weapons and disarmament see Matthew Evangelista, "The New Soviet Approach to Security," World Policy Journal 3 (Fall 1986): 561-599; see also Gerhard Wettig, "New Thinking on Security and East-West Relations," Problems of Communism 37 (March/April 1988): 1-14.

[24]See Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "Gorbachev, The New Thinking of Soviet Foreign-Security Policy and the Military: Recent Trends and Implications," in Gorbachev's Reforms: U.S. and Japanese Assessments, eds. Peter Juviler and Hiroshi Kimura (New York: Aldine de Gruyer, 1988), pp. 128-133.

> ballistic missiles. Initially, many Soviet observers embraced (for the first time) the desirability of the condition of mutual assured destruction, for the medium term, and later began to question the relationship between parity and stability.[25]

Nuclear arms control has thus assumed priority as a means of reducing the external threat, limiting resource requirements for the military, and establishing a framework of stability in East-West strategic relations.[26]

The final factor leading to the rise of new political thinking is Gorbachev's increasing recognition of the multipolar and interdependent character of contemporary international relations.[27] This view has already reflected itself in a Soviet tendency to deal directly with key regional actors, such as China and Japan in the Far East, Egypt and Israel in the Middle East, and Mexico in Central America.[28] Moreover, it

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[25]Lynch, p. xxi.

[26]See "Televised Speech on Foreign Policy, Moscow, August 18, 1986," in Gorbachev, pp. 363-372.

[27]Alexander Dallin points out that "for a long time [the term interdependence] and its implications (so alien to the belief in the victory of one world system over the other) had been rebuffed in Moscow, indeed, at one point it had been denounced as a subversive Western import. Now, on the contrary, it too serves to underscore the shared priorities that . . . are said to come before the class struggle, class interests or the class approach" (Alexander Dallin, "Gorbachev's Foreign Policy and the `New Political Thinking' in the Soviet Union," in Juviler and Kimura, p. 102).

[28]Lynch, p. xxv.

was the recognition of global interdependence, underlined in the starkest form by nuclear weapons which threaten "the very survival of the human race," which led to the redefinition of the Leninist concept of peaceful coexistence.[29]

The concepts of multipolarity and interdependence have crystallized in Gorbachev's new thinking about the Third World and have engendered what Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier has called a "hands-off" approach to radical change in the Third World.[30] The party program adopted by the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in February 1986 illustrates that new thinking regarding the Third World is taking place.[31] The new program replaces the 1961 text that was "suffused with Khrushchev's confidence" in

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[29]Ibid. A rather obscure quote from an early (1899) Lenin draft of a Party program has come to justify the new Soviet concern with interdependence. Lenin wrote that the common interests of mankind are higher than the class interests of the proletariat. Gorbachev has adopted this assertion, and he himself has argued in favor of "the priority of the interests of social development, of all human values, over the interests of one or another class." See Dallin, p. 102.

[30]Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "New Soviet Thinking About the Third World," World Policy Journal 4 (Fall 1987): 651-674.

[31]Alvin Z. Rubinstein argues however that the brief treatment of the Third World at the Twenty-Seventh Congress--"a mere 150 words touched on Third World issues, and two-thirds of these spoke of Afghanistan"--illustrates Gorbachev's greater concern with Soviet domestic problems. See Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "A Third World Policy Waits for Gorbachev," Orbis 30 (Summer 1986): 355-364.

the Soviet Union's ability to break out of military encirclement, to weaken the West, and to refashion the world by supporting the grievances, aspirations, and needs of the colonial peoples and newly independent nations.[32]

> In those days, the Soviets expected and fostered a permanent revolutionary process in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The 1961 program held that political independence was a sham. To be genuine, independence had to be extended by the further struggle for economic liberation and a progressive political system. Capitalism, in all its forms and manifestations, offered nothing but "suffering to the peoples." Hence the future lay in undertaking a "non-capitalist path of development." The political power of the local middle class was to be limited through the establishment of a progressive national front, the foundations of capitalism were to be undermined by expanding the public sector and nationalizing foreign investment, and sovereignty was to be bolstered through close diplomatic and economic cooperation with the Soviet bloc.[33]

Gorbachev's program, however, offers quite different formulations of the historic role of the developing countries, their domestic policies, and the Soviet Union's support for these states. Its thrust is to raise doubts about the systemic, extremely politicized assumptions regarding the utility of anti-Western grievances in the Third World. First, the developing countries are not seen as an important

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[32]Valkenier, p. 652.

[33]Ibid., pp. 652-653.

revolutionary force; their role in the demise of capitalism is not mentioned. Moreover, the emphasis on the ongoing process of national liberation has been dropped altogether. Instead, the 1986 program speaks of the "liberated areas"--an expression meant to convey that the tumultuous era of liberation is over and that we have entered a new period in which nation building, not combatting capitalism or imperialism, is of paramount importance.

In terms of domestic politics, the 1986 program does not assume that all developing countries will eventually follow the non-capitalist path. While mentioning nations of "socialist orientation" approvingly, following the non-capitalist path is not touted as providing the answer for the entire Third World. Instead, the program acknowledges that some states have chosen a socialist orientation while others are "traveling the capitalist road," and makes no prognosis about the future of either choice. It merely accepts that each state chooses its own system.

Also absent from the program are any statements about Moscow's "international duty" to support Third World strivings. Only "profound fraternal solidarity and sincere admiration" for the people who have experienced colonial rule is offered. These general points about Soviet relations with the Third World--all

more non-committal than the 1961 program--are followed by an explicit disavowal of close Soviet identification with the radical states. Henceforth, the Soviet Union will support states of socialist orientation "only to the extent of its ability." The program insists that "every people create their material and technical base . . . for building a new society mainly through their own efforts."[34]

These new principles of Soviet foreign policy toward the Third World demonstrate that Moscow has come to accept the fact of world-wide economic interdependence.

> Instead of hoping to dominate the world market, the Soviets now show more tolerance for the economic map as it is drawn and a sober respect for the power of the advanced capitalist states--not just the United States but Japan and South Korea as well. They are saying, in effect, "Hey, stop the world, we want to get on!"[35]

Such sentiments are caused by the demonstrable failure of the original systemic approach to international economics which saw the world as divided into two

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[34]See Ibid.; see also "The Political Report . . .," in Gorbachev, pp. 83-203. Valkenier argues that these points are exceedingly important, as they "explain, guide and justify Soviet foreign policy." Moreover they "were not plucked out of thin air. They had been carefully and painstakingly phrased by reform minded academic and political experts, often against the acrimonious opposition of dogmatists. Gorbachev . . . is legitimizing a way of thinking that has been maturing for at least a decade." Valkenier, pp. 653-654.

[35]Ibid., p. 655.

separated and hostile world markets. This understanding led the Soviet Union to pursue policies in the Third World that demonstrated the superiority of the socialist system--charging lower interest rates than the West, financing industrialization projects, promoting the expansion of the public sector, and encouraging an import-substitution development model.

> Soviet rhetoric claimed that socialist policies and development advice promoted economic liberation, a claim borne out by India's state steel sector and Algeria's oil industry. In practical terms, these measures were expected to expand the Soviet Union's presence and influence in the Third World.[36]

These politically aggressive and economically generous policies proved to be quite successful for a while; however, for a variety of reasons, this favorable situation began to unravel by the mid-1970s. Faced with an array of challenges, the Soviets began to modify their theories about international economics and to implement different policies.

> During the 1970s . . . Moscow abandoned the doctrine of two competing world markets, stressing, instead, the existence of a single world economy over and above its socialist and capitalist components . . . [S]oviet economic policies became less systemic as well. The South began to be treated more openly and purposefully as a source of raw materials and commodities that were either in short supply or too expensive to produce at home. Soviet development theory changed accordingly [and] . . . a mixed economic model was recognized as offering better prospects for

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[36]Ibid.

> advancement than the easing-out of private capital in the name of socialism. At the same time as its economic relations with developing countries became increasingly pragmatic, Moscow became less generous with its aid, especially to its radical clients.[37]

Under Gorbachev there are no signs of reversal of these trends, in fact there has been an advance in de-ideologizing Soviet theory and behavior. A concerted effort to become part of the international community has supplanted earlier competition with the West. There is also a much more pronounced emphasis on extracting maximum benefits from exchanges with developing countries, with little regard for how this squares with socialist principles. In fact, Soviet economic relations with the Third World today "dispense with the fiction of altruistic socialist aid and instead reflect the belief that aid and trade should help to develop the Soviet economy."[38] In general, the Third World is no longer used as an example of the ravages of capitalism, but rather is treated as an area contributing to international instability. In order to create greater stability the Soviet Union has acknowledged the value of capitalist institutions like private trade and land ownership, and has counseled developing countries to open themselves to market forces. Soviet economists now

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[37]Ibid., pp. 656-657.

[38]Ibid., p. 658.

maintain that many of the countries that relied on the free market have approached the level of development achieved by the Soviet Union, while those that chose socialism go hungry.[39]

Just as the failure of events to conform to projections has prompted a reevaluation of Soviet economic theory and practice in the Third World, so, too, it is affecting the political and diplomatic spheres. This is evident from discussions now taking place around three key issues: the relevance of Marxist theory to the Third World; the appropriateness of radical political models for developing countries; and, the promise of the Non-Aligned Movement, once an important component of Soviet anti-imperialist campaigns. In each area confident activism is being replaced by doubts that argue for creating distance, reducing commitments, or taking new departures.[40]

Current thinking about the Third World's political future no longer revolves around the question of whether developing countries are ready for socialism. Some authors now are even asking whether Marxist analysis has much validity as applied to the Third World. Experts are now being urged to study the particular

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[39]See Bill Keller, "Soviet Article Doubts Economic Line," New York Times, May 9, 1987, p. 4.

[40]Valkenier, p. 660.

characteristics of Third World development as opposed to universal principles of development valid for all countries.

In general, since 1980, Third World culture has been singled out increasingly as the prime obstacle to the patterns of political development described by Marx. According to Valkenier,

> specialized studies and roundtable discussions express grave doubts about the prospects of linking the radical aspirations of developing countries with Marxism . . . [noting] a lack of congruity between the Western tradition of Marxism and the Eastern experience. . . .[41]

Moreover, other specialists argue that the unexpected twists and turns in Third World development can best be understood not by systemic analysis, but by coming to terms with the diversity of Third World experience. "From this fact these experts proceed to question whether the traditional Marxist preoccupation with the laws governing the life of nations is appropriate."[42]

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[41]Ibid., p. 662.

[42]Ibid. Valkenier continues there is no exact counterpart in political pronouncements to such candid thinking, but some movement in that direction is evident, as we have seen, in the new Party program, which, rather than proclaiming a single non-capitalist future for all developing countries, acknowledges the existence of both capitalist and socialist oriented states--a distinct step toward recognizing current realities and outgrowing the Marxist compulsion to predict the future in conformity with a predetermined scheme.

In addition to questioning the relevance of Marxist theory to developing countries, Soviet experts are also taking another look at traditional notions of Third World progressive political development and raising doubts about the utility of Third World radicalism for Soviet diplomacy. Before the ascendence of Gorbachev, some Soviet analysts were arguing that socialist orientation is not irreversible and that a country can revert to capitalism--"an admission . . . that could be interpreted to mean that the Soviet Union was not fully committed to the defense of socialist oriented states."[43] Putting distance between socialist-oriented states and the Soviet Union has continued under Gorbachev. At the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress, the general secretary made no mention of socialist orientation, rather he referred to the "unstoppable process of socioeconomic transformation," carefully avoiding any more explicit formulation. Together with the fact that the new Party program acknowledges the existence of both socialist- and capitalist-oriented states in the Third World and pointedly calls for the former to build socialism through their own efforts, the

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[43]Ibid., p. 667. Valkenier's assertion is based on her reading of Socialist Orientation in the Liberated Countries, (1982), with contributions by Karen Brutents, Rostislav Ulianovsky, Eugenii Primakow, and Anatolii Gromyko. The stature of the contributors leads her to posit that the volume is an authoritative pronouncement on the issue.

Soviets no longer seem to be claiming that socialism is the wave of the future in the Third World, nor that capitalism in the Third World is temporary and transitional.

Further, the Soviets are putting the Third World on notice that they no longer wish to finance the building of socialism in these countries.[44]

> Of course radical political regimes will continue to exist--Moscow cannot and would not hope otherwise. Some will be allied with the Soviet Union and claim to be practicing some form of socialism; others will seek Soviet support and advice. But there are likely to be fewer free lunches.[45]

Valkenier also argues that evidence exists that since the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress, Soviet leadership has reversed gears and is now sanctioning a regression from vanguard parties to united fronts--arguing that socialist-oriented states are best governed by a broad united front composed of all progressive forces, including the petty and medium sized

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[44]Most analysts would agree with Rajan Menon who argues that "because of the economy's problems, the Soviet leaders may try to avoid commitments in the Third World. . . . The goodwill exhibited by the Soviet Union toward states of socialist orientation and its frequently voiced commitment to assist the spread of socialism must not obscure a basic point: domestic political stability, national security, and the state of the Soviet economy are far more important in the official Soviet scheme of things than ventures in the Third World" (Rajan Menon, Soviet Power in the Third World, [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986], p. 157).

[45]Valkenier, p. 668.

bourgeoisie--and from revolutionary to national democracy.[46] While discussions of this sort may be difficult for Westerners to decipher, Valkenier argues that they have real practical implications as they provide theoretical justification for pressuring radicals to pursue a more moderate, conciliatory economic and political course--a course that not only increased their chances of survival but also decreases the likelihood of Washington's support of counterinsurgencies and of requests for Moscow's support.[47]

Moreover, recent reassessments of the Non-Aligned Movement illustrate a growing dissatisfaction with the movement and an increasing perception that its interests are not congruent with Soviet interests. From 1979 to 1983, when the Movement was headed by Fidel Castro, Moscow offered uncritical support of the organization. Then, on the eve of the 1983 Non-Aligned summit, when the chairmanship passed to India, criticism of the Movement's lack of unity and the resulting diffusion of its anti-imperialist efforts, appeared.[48]

Dissatisfaction has become more pronounced under Gorbachev. Just prior to the Twenty-Seventh Congress,

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[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., p. 669.

[48]Ibid. See also Light, pp. 229-233.

Karen Brutents noted in Pravda that anti-imperialism was entering a new phase. He observed,

> the post-colonial period of the liberation struggle's development, when anti-imperialism continued to draw strength primarily from the problems, emotions, and memories of the colonial days . . . is coming to an end, [and he warned that the] readiness of developing countries to play an active part in the struggle against imperialism should not be taken for granted.[49]

From the Soviet perspective, the rise of virulent Third World nationalism and the Non-Aligned Movement's preoccupation with economic, rather than security, issues challenge Soviet policy in the Third World.

> The Iranian revolution and the obstinate counterinsurgency in Afghanistan have aroused concern not just about Islamic fundamentalism but also about the status of Third World self-identity generally. Inasmuch as [the Non-Aligned Movement] sees little difference between Western and Soviet policies and does not ascribe imperialist behavior to . . . the West alone, it has seriously undermined the diplomatic posture of those developing countries that traditionally have leaned in the direction of Moscow.[50]

Karen Brutents proposes dealing with this challenge not on the basis of old assumptions about common Soviet-Third World aims but with an awareness that elemental national feelings fuel today's anti-imperialism. Brutents warns against arousing "the deep-rooted,

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[49]Karen Brutents, "The Liberated Countries and the Anti-Imperialist Struggle," Pravda, January 10, 1986, pp. 3-4. Quoted in Valkenier, p. 669.

[50]Valkenier, p. 670.

spontaneous, anti-imperialist feelings of the masses," urging, instead, reliance on mature "political forces."[51] This could be a reference either to national communist parties or, more likely, in view of the insignificance of these parties in most developing countries, to stable, well-established states.[52]

The Soviets see the Non-Aligned Movement's increasing preoccupation with economic grievances as another example of Third World self-absorption and indifference to the broader issues that concern Moscow, especially arms control and disarmament.[53] Moreover, Moscow no longer supports the Third World's demands for a New International Economic Order, claiming that it no longer corresponds with Soviet aims and interests. When the program was first presented at the United Nations, the Soviets endorsed it as a "progressive code of rules by which states should be guided in their economic relations."[54] By the late 1970s, however, the Soviets had become openly critical of the NIEO, arguing that it was too exclusively centered on concessional arrangements for developing countries. "Moscow expressed its preference for an economic order that

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[51]Brutents, quoted in Ibid.

[52]Valkenier, p. 670.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Pravda, April 12, 1974, p. 4 in Ibid.

would `democratize' international trade by abolishing restrictions and trade barriers affecting the socialist states as well."[55] Indeed, at the Twenty-Seventh Congress, Gorbachev proposed convening a world congress on problems of economic security where the Soviet Union would launch a program that would compete with that of the non-aligned states. "What is important here," Valkenier argues, "is not that the Soviet Union would be promoting reforms beneficial to the bloc but that Gorbachev's Soviet Union, in offering its own vision of a new economic order, is not worried about aggravating relations with the Third World."[56] Such a move is clear indication that Soviet interests and Third World claims against the West no longer coincide.

Perestroika and foreign policy new thinking, and the massive changes they have ushered in--including the fall of Eastern Europe--have altered the context in which Latin American revolutionary movements function. The response of these movements to *perestroika* and new thinking and the implications of these Soviet policies for the revolutionary Left in Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador will be studied in subsequent chapters.

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[55]Ibid, p. 671. See also Light, pp. 132-134.

[56]Valkenier, p. 671.

CHAPTER 4

PERESTROIKA AND THE POLITICS OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

If *perestroika* signals a "conceptual revolution" in Soviet foreign policy toward the Third World, and if former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was correct in asserting that the main requirement of the new foreign policy is that the Soviet Union should not bear additional expenses in the defense of its legitimate foreign policy interests, what will this mean for Cuba? Cuba has been a favored ally of the Soviet Union for the past three decades and the political and economic ties between the two are strong. Since the enunciation of *perestroika* however, a new tension has entered the bilateral relationship as President Castro has made it clear that he disapproves of Gorbachev's reforms and has no intention of initiating similar policies. Castro's harsh anti-*perestroika* views have led to increased isolation of his regime, even among its erstwhile friends and supporters, and have brought into question the Soviet Union's continued support. Many ask how a Soviet government engaged in momentous social, economic and political transformation can continue to provide subsidies, which in 1988 totaled nearly $7 billion in hard currency, to an old-line "Stalinist" state. This leads to the equally important question of whether

Castro can survive without these subsidies, for in weighing the costs and benefits for both sides in the bilateral relationship, it is clear that Cuba is far less important to the Soviet Union than the Soviet Union is to Cuba.

As the Soviet Union's closest ally in Latin America, Cuba has enjoyed a special relationship with the USSR. Cuba's economic survival is dependent upon the maintenance of this special relationship. Measured in 1987, Soviet economic and military aid to Cuba exceeded $4 billion annually or about $10 million each day. Cuba runs a large trade deficit with the USSR; its debt to the Soviet Union and other bloc nations exceeded $22 billion in 1987.[1] Moreover, The Soviet Union and Eastern European countries shelter the Cuban market from the fluctuations of the world market by purchasing sugar and nickel at fixed prices. The USSR also sells oil to Cuba at bargain prices, enabling Cuba to resell some at a profit on the world market. In 1985 Cuba earned half of its hard currency from the resale of Soviet oil.[2] In a 1985 interview with Playboy magazine Fidel argued that:

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[1]U.S. Department of State, Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986-1987, p. 66.

[2]Ibid.

> Frankly, the United States has fewer and fewer things to offer Cuba. If we were able to export our products to the United States, we would have to start making plans for new lines of production to be exported to the United States, because everything we are producing now and in the next five years has already been sold to other markets. We would have to take them away from the other socialist countries in order to sell them to the United States, and the socialist countries pay us much better prices and have much better relations with us than does the United States.[3]

In return for their extensive economic assistance, the Soviets have acquired, in Cuba, a major military asset in the Western Hemisphere, one which has played a unique role in promoting Soviet political and strategic interests especially in the Third World. Among communist nations, only Vietnam and East Germany have received more military aid from the USSR, and Cuba has become a "key maritime strategic piece on Moscow's global chessboard."[4] As Robert Pastor notes:

> Cuba is a small country with a big country's foreign policy. No other developing nation maintains more diplomatic missions, intelligence operatives, and military advisors and troops abroad than does Cuba, not even oil-producing states that can afford it. The gap between its internal resources and its external capabilities is filled by the Soviet Union, not because of altruism, but because

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[3]"Playboy Interview," Playboy Magazine, August 1985, 179.

[4]Raymond Duncan, The Soviet Union and Cuba, (New York: Praeger, 1985), p. 7.

the Soviets are assured that what the Cubans do abroad will serve their purpose.[5]

Moreover, Soviet assistance to Castro's Cuba has provided the Soviets with the largest intelligence collection facility outside the USSR. The Lourdes facility near Havana enables the Soviet Union to monitor sensitive U.S. maritime, military and space communications as well as telephone communications in the United States.

The development of a special relationship with Cuba since the victory of the Fidelistas has aided the Soviet Union in its transformation from a continental power whose military focus was the defense of the homeland and whose military reach was limited to regions contiguous to its own borders, to a global power with world-wide naval deployments and a military position in every major region of the globe.[6] Similarly, Cuba's economic dependence on the Soviet bloc and the extensive military assistance which flows from it has helped give the Soviets extensive influence in the management and

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[5]Robert Pastor, "Cuba and the Soviet Union: Does Cuba Act Alone?" in The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean Basin, ed. Barry B. Levine (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), p. 207.

[6]See Melvin A. Goodman, "The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Military Dimension," in The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades, eds. Francis Fukuyama and Andrzej Korbonski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 46-66, for a discussion of the development of Soviet global military power over the past three decades.

direction of Cuba's affairs. Yet, it would be incorrect to think of Cuba as simply a Soviet-controlled surrogate for the USSR in the Third World.

Perhaps the most important way in which Castro has expressed his autonomy recently is through his denunciations of Soviet *perestroika* and the changes it has ushered in. Castro has argued that Gorbachev's reforms seek to "build capitalism" in the USSR, yet "nothing and nobody will make Cuba deviate from the socialist path." Castro has called on the Cuban people to defend "the ideological and military trenches of the revolution," insisting that in Cuba it will be "socialism or death!"

These sentiments and Castro's unwillingness to reform at a time in world history when socialism around the world is in retreat, has led to increased political isolation of the regime. Erstwhile friends of Cuba in Eastern Europe have begun to abandon Castro's regime. In March 1990, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria voted with the U.S. in the United Nations Human Rights Commission to place Cuba on its list of nations which violate the human rights of its citizens.[7] Similarly, in February 1990 the Czechoslovak government served notice that it no longer wishes to act as Cuba's

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[7]See "UN Votes, Local Dissenters Gaoled," Latin American Weekly Report, 22 March 1990, p. 3.

"protecting power," and host to its interest section, in Washington.

Cuba's relations with Spain, its most important Western European trading partner, have also deteriorated recently in a dispute over asylum seekers.[8] In his speech commemorating the thirty-seventh anniversary of the assault on the Moncada Garrison, President Castro castigated the Spanish government for having, "through arrogance and pride," collaborated with "U.S. imperialist aims."[9] Finally, with the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, Cuba is now the only Marxist regime in the hemisphere and one of the few governments whose mandate is not based on open elections.

This chapter will, first, examine the impact of Gorbachev's reforms on Soviet-Cuban relations. I will demonstrate that reduced levels of Soviet aid to Cuba coupled with the changes set in motion by *perestroika*, especially in Eastern Europe, are increasing Cuba's economic woes and may have political ramifications in the not-too-distant future. Second, the Castro

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[8]Cuba owes Spain approximately US$900 million; the only larger creditor is the Soviet Union. In 1989 Madrid granted Havana US$260 million worth of loans and commercial credit. See "Blowing Hot and Cold on Spain," Latin American Weekly Report, 9 August 1990, p. 3.

[9]See text of President Castro's address in Granma Weekly Review, 5 August 1990, pp. 3-5.

government's response to *perestroika* is analyzed. I posit that the Cuban government has devised a strategy which, through limited political reforms for pro-Castro loyalists and increased repression of dissidents, seeks to maintain Castro-style socialism and Cuban Leninism in an environment increasingly hostile to both. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the likelihood that Castro's "survival strategy" will succeed.

Soviet-Cuban Relations

Much of the analysis in Western political science of Soviet-Cuban relations since the Cuban revolution has portrayed Cuba as a Soviet client which unquestioningly hews to the policy line articulated by Moscow. Such an understanding of the relationship between these two states has led some analysts to suggest that Castro's harsh anti-*perestroika* remarks signal a new strain in Soviet-Cuban relations which will lead the Soviet Union to exert pressure on the Castro regime to tow the new line.

Other analysts argue that such an understanding of Soviet-Cuban relations is too simplistic and, in the end, incorrect.[10] Peter Shearman argues that Soviet-

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[10]See especially, Edward Gonzalez, "Cuba, The Third World, and the Soviet Union," in Fukuyama and Korbonski, pp. 123-147; Jorge I. Dominguez, "Cuban Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 58 (Fall 1978): 83-108; and, Peter Shearman, The Soviet Union and Cuba, (London: Routledge

Cuban relations over the past three decades have been determined by individual leaders, ideological perceptions and geostrategic considerations. At times the ideological perceptions and geostrategic concerns of the Soviet and Cuban leaderships have meshed. However for most of the past three decades they have not and bilateral relations have been tense. The current rift between Moscow and Havana is therefore not the first between the two parties; however the current differences are arguably more fundamental and of much greater consequence than previous ones.

The previous disagreements have tended to revolve around divergent perceptions of what constitute fundamental issues in world politics, and, flowing from these, differing foreign policy priorities and strategies. Through the 1960s the questions of Latin American and Third World underdevelopment, economic dependency, and "imperialist domination" were the most crucial issues in world politics for Castro. For Khrushchev and Brezhnev the central issue was the competition between the two superpowers. Developments in the Third World were viewed in the context of the shifting correlation of forces and the changing strategic balance between East and West. Castro's North-South perspective led to the view that there could

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& Kegan Paul, 1987).

be no compromise with imperialism: it was the duty of the revolutionary to make the revolution, and the duty of the international revolutionaries to assist other guerrilla movements in their struggles for liberation. Khrushchev and Brezhnev, on the other hand, advocated a policy of peaceful coexistence in which some accommodation with the U.S. was necessary in order to avoid a direct confrontation that could lead to nuclear war. As detailed in the previous chapter, these differences in perceptions and strategies caused tensions in the bilateral relationship during the first decade of Castroism in Cuba. By the late 1960s Castro had condemned peaceful coexistence as "an imperialist modus vivendi" and had accused the Soviets of being an "accomplice of imperialism."[11]

In the early 1970s Castro toned down his rhetoric of guerrilla warfare, institutionalized a Marxist-Leninist system, changed his perspective on inter-American relations and began to foster diplomatic relations with Latin American states. The Soviet-Cuban relationship became more harmonious, cooperative and cohesive, with both states now pursuing similar policies in different regions which served the interests of leaders in Moscow and Havana. These changes may have

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[11]See Granma Weekly Review, 7 July 1968, p. 1, and 19 March 1967, p. 1.

been due, in part, to restrictions emanating from the dependent nature of the bilateral relationship with the USSR. Castro himself, in the wake of Soviet cutbacks in oil deliveries which forced him to institute rationing in January 1968, acknowledged the Soviets' ability to apply pressure on Cuba.[12] However, the changes were also a response to other domestic, regional and international factors.

> Che Guevara's death in the Bolivian jungle symbolized the weakness of the revolutionary movement in Latin America. The emergence of a radical leftist military regime in Peru provided evidence of alternative challenges to imperialism in the North-South struggle. Domestic economic problems and the seeming permanency of the U.S. economic embargo and U.S. hostility to Castro's Cuba, and the beneficial trade terms offered by the Eastern bloc, led to Cuba's application to join the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance--which was accepted in 1972.[13]

The 1970s witnessed cooperative military ventures in Angola and Ethiopia. Cuba's participation in both civil wars was perceived by many as an example of Cuba acting as "Soviet puppet," or "surrogate" in Africa in order to further the geostrategic interests of the Soviet Union. However, this interpretation ignores Cuba's active policy in Africa which can be traced back to the early 1960s. Indeed, in 1960, before diplomatic

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[12]Granma Weekly Review, 23 March 1968, p. 1.

[13]Peter Shearman, "Gorbachev and the Restructuring of Soviet-Cuban Relations," The Journal of Communist Studies 5 (December 1989): 71.

relations had been established with the Soviet Union, Cuba sent military and medical supplies to the Algerian Liberation Front. Moreover, while it appears that in Ethiopia the Soviets and Cubans, through a series of meetings in the mid-1970s, were able to coordinate a policy of support for Ethiopia in its confrontation with its socialist neighbor, the same coordination did not occur earlier in Angola. Unlike Soviet support for the MPLA in Angola, Cuba's support was based on a sense of revolutionary duty and international solidarity. Cuban support never wavered, nor was it tempered by the level of tension existing between the East and West.[14]

It was the Soviet-Cuban cooperative interventions in Angola and Ethiopia that had the greatest negative impact on detente between the superpowers, leading to U.S. distrust and suspicion of Soviet behavior and intentions in other Third World theaters. With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, an action which served to confirm the worst fears of many concerning Soviet behavior and intentions, detente was abandoned for "the second Cold War."

With the advent of "the second Cold War," Castro must have felt that the Soviet commitment to his nation was indestructible. However, with the rise of new

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[14]See especially Shearman, The Soviet Union and Cuba, pp. 33-56.

leaders after the death of Brezhnev in 1982, the rapid disintegration of the Soviet economy, and the radical restructuring of Soviet domestic and foreign policies, especially since 1985, Soviet-Cuban relations have entered a period of uncertainty.

Since the death of Brezhnev, but especially since 1985, there have been changes in leadership, ideology, and in geostrategic concerns in the Soviet Union--in all the three factors that have been central in determining Soviet foreign policy toward Cuba. As Jerry Hough argues, the rise to power of Gorbachev and the various personnel shuffles he has accomplished since 1985 signal the rise of a new generation of Soviet leaders who are most concerned with modernizing Soviet society and increasing Soviet integration with the West.[15] In terms of ideology, as detailed in the previous chapter, Soviet theorists are currently questioning the applicability of traditional Marxist notions of development in the Third World and are even advocating the adoption of capitalist market mechanisms. Moreover, Soviet foreign policy New Thinking abandons the notion of the division of the world into two hostile camps in favor of a notion of global economic and political interdependence. Revolution in the Third World is de-

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[15]Jerry Hough, "The End of Russia's `Khomeini' Period," World Policy Journal 14 (Fall 1987): 583-604.

emphasized, if not actively discouraged. Similarly, the U.S. is still seen as being central to Soviet geostrategic thinking but now as a partner rather than an implacable adversary. In addition, when Gorbachev came to power in 1985, his most pressing problem was the critical state of the Soviet economy. Growth rates had been declining yet Gorbachev was faced with rising expectations from the Soviet population that the system could not expect to satisfy without radical structural reform. These economic problems were having a "ripple effect" through Soviet society leading to increased alcoholism, drug addiction, and crime.[16]

Given Cuba's economic dependence on the Soviet Union, its tight integration into the CMEA, continued U.S. antagonism to the Castro regime, and Castro's own clear antipathy towards the Gorbachev phenomenon, the fundamental changes in Soviet priorities and concerns are certain to result in changes in the Soviet-Cuban relationship. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* have engendered greater public scrutiny of Soviet foreign policy, and the Soviet press has began an unprecedented questioning of Moscow's traditional foreign policy commitments, including its commitment to Cuba. The pages of Soviet publications, especially Moscow News, have served as a

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[16]Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World, (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 8.

forum for the growing debate over Soviet foreign policy, a debate which expresses an increasing unwillingness to sustain the costs of empire when the Soviet economy is experiencing severe problems.

Writing in 1989, Andrei Kortunov of the Institute of the USA and Canada stated that Moscow had given more than twenty-five percent of its foreign aid to Cuba in 1988-1989. He noted that the Soviet Union's total foreign aid budget was almost six times greater, on a per capita basis, than that of the U.S. and asked why aid was being given to Third World countries that are dictatorships and engage in "adventurist" foreign policies.[17] Moscow News also quoted a Moscow deputy to the Soviet Congress of Peoples Deputies as saying, "We can't tolerate that sort of situation when our own people have to get ration cards for soap and sugar and can't find a decent cut of meat in the stores."[18]

Similar concerns have been voiced by Professor Aleksandr Sharkov of the CPSU in a roundtable discussion of *perestroika* and Soviet foreign policy published in International Affairs in July 1988. The pattern

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[17]"Soviet Foreign Aid Questioned," The Current Digest of the Soviet Press 42 (February 1990): 15.

[18]Quoted in Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Cuba's Cloudy Future," Foreign Affairs 70 (Summer 1990): 116. See also "Castro: Beleaguered Champion of Socialism," The Current Digest of the Soviet Press 42 (November 1990): 20-21.

developed under Khrushchev and Brezhnev of exporting oil to Cuba at below world market prices and importing sugar at prices well above the world market price is unacceptable, he argues, as it has "amounted to exporting our national product without compensation."[19] Also, the New York Times reported on March 8, 1990 that "in a striking break with the traditional courtesy shown to other communist countries," the Soviet press has "this week opened up on the Cuban leadership with a dose of withering scorn." Times reporter Bill Keller points to a feature story in the March 8, 1990 Moscow News which describes Cuba as an "impoverished police state mimicking Brezhnev-era Communism" and which noted with approval the growth of a small dissident movement on the island as evidence that pressure is growing to alter Soviet-Cuban relations and that, in fact, highly-placed members of the Soviet leadership desire a change in bilateral relations.[20]

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[19]See the roundtable on "Perestroika, The Nineteenth Party Conference and Foreign Policy," International Affairs, (July 1988): 3-18.

[20]Bill Keller, "Soviet Press Snaps Back at Castro, Painting an Outdated Police State," New York Times, 8 March 1990, p. 1. Keller argues that "articles criticizing Mr. Castro would almost surely have required high level clearance," yet one must question if in this era of glasnost and increased internal debate, the opinions quoted in Moscow News are indeed shared by the Soviet leadership.

It is clear, given Cuba's dependence on the USSR for economic survival, that Gorbachev has it in his power to use economic leverage should he wish to persuade Castro to reform the Cuban economy and polity. As of yet, however, there has not been a significant reduction in Soviet aid to Cuba. Many Western analysts thought that the April 1989 meeting of Gorbachev and Castro in Havana would be a clash of communist titans in which the reformer from Moscow would chastise the anti-*perestroika* Castro. "Gorbachev appears to have another fight on his hands . . . with one of the last living legends of the Communist world," wrote the Boston Globe; "When Mikhail Gorbachev touches down in Havana on Sunday, it will be to meet a man at the foot of the gangway, Fidel Castro, who stands for everything Gorbachev is against," argued the Miami Herald.[21] At the very least, many U.S. journalists seemed to think, Gorbachev "the smooth salesman of new Communist pragmatism" would surely distance himself from the "khaki-clad revolutionary."[22] Gorbachev's visit to Havana provided little in the way of signs of the political rift expected by many. Although there is speculation that behind closed doors President Gorbachev

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[21]Quoted in "Gorbachev in Havana: A Reporter's Notebook," Cuba Update 10 (Summer 1989): 11.

[22]Bill Keller in the New York Times quoted in Ibid.

had given Castro some form of stern warning, this requires either discounting or ignoring public statements by the Soviet leader.

In his address to the Cuban National Assembly on April 4, 1989 Gorbachev called the Cuban experience "an original and important part of the world experience in building socialism." He said,

> the cooperation between our countries and Soviet-Cuban ties are of a stable nature . . . [since] they are based on the principles of equality of rights and emphasize respect for independent action, understanding of mutual responsibility and of the need for international mutual assistance. . . . [The significance of these principles] is not diminished in the least by differences in the approach to any of the questions related to the particular features of our countries' historical development and cultures nor by the different tasks ahead of them or by their international situation.[23]

Moreover, Gorbachev continued, while in the USSR

> we are condemned to achieve victory in *perestroika* . . . we do not see our approaches and solutions as a universal prescription. On the contrary, problems may be similar but each party solves them in an independent manner on the basis of each country's conceptions and peculiarities.[24]

Gorbachev reiterated this when, in a news conference after his address, he said,

> this visit was preceded by a lot of speculation, as though instead of old friends,

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[23]Full texts of the addresses by Castro and Gorbachev are found in Cuba Update Supplement 1 (Summer 1989): 1-23.

[24]Ibid.

> we are practically enemies. This was pure invention. We are friends. No country is like another. Dogmatism is harmful. We agree on socialism. No one could expect anything else, knowing us. Each country solves its own problems according to its own history and experiences. Our methods in the USSR aren't necessarily the same as Cuba's, but we all agree on socialist principles.[25]

In addition to the reassuring rhetoric, the meeting of the two leaders also yielded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation Between the Republic of Cuba and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the first of its kind between the two nations. The treaty reasserts their "fraternal and indestructible friendship and solidarity, based on a common ideology . . . internationalism and identical objectives. . . ."[26] More importantly, on April 17, 1990, after a week of negotiations in Havana, Cuba and the Soviet Union signed the largest trade agreement in their three decades of commercial relations. The 1990 accord is worth $14 billion, an increase of 8.7 percent over 1989 volume. Key aspects of this year's trade package include:

> -The Soviet Union will continue to supply Cuba with oil--annually some 13 million tons according to Moscow--cereals and other foodstuffs, raw materials, equipment and replacement parts for industry.
> -The level of Cuban sales to the Soviet Union at mutually acceptable prices will be

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[25]"Reporter's Notebook," p. 12.

[26]A full text of the treaty appears in Cuba Update Supplement 1 (Summer 1989): 24-25. See also Granma Weekly Review, 29 April 1990, p. 1.

maintained in key exports such as nickel, sugar, citrus and chrome.
-Increased Cuban export of non-traditional goods, especially medical equipment and medicines.
-The two countries have agreed to set up a working group to prepare for the next round of negotiations and to consider new and more flexible trading models.[27]

At a press conference before his departure from Cuba, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin, a signatory to the agreement, said the USSR has no intention of using its economic links with Cuba to pressure the island's government into following the path of *perestroika*. He said the Soviets intended to fully respect the direction the Cuban leadership has taken while admitting that the Soviet Union's decision to turn to a regulated market economy would have implications for its trading partners. But, in the case of Cuba, Vietnam and Mongolia, Abalkin said, other factors also come into play.[28]

Alexander Baryshev, Deputy Editor in Chief of the Latin American Journal of the USSR's Academy of Sciences, has written that "Fidel Castro's concern that the Soviet Union might discontinue aid to Cuba is unfounded . . . the Soviet Union will never refuse help,

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[27]See Gail Reed, "Weathering The Storm," Cuba Update 11 (Summer 1990): 19.

[28]Ibid. See also "Leonid Abalkin: We Value our Friendship with Cuba," in The Current Digest of The Soviet Press 42 (December 1990): 20.

within its capabilities, to those who need such help, be they socialist or capitalist."[29] Although Soviet aid to Cuba has not yet decreased, the odds are good that it will be cut significantly in the coming years given the Soviet's decreasing economic capabilities and the increasing public pressure on the Gorbachev leadership to reconsider foreign policy commitments.[30] Moreover, as Susan Kaufman Purcell argues, as the cold war winds down, Havana's value to Moscow has declined.

> Technological advances have reduced Cuba's importance for intelligence gathering and even as a military base. In addition, because Gorbachev's policies no longer involve active support of "wars of national liberation" in the Third World, Cuba's continued support of Marxist guerrilla groups in Central America and elsewhere directly challenges Gorbachev and undermines his efforts to change the Soviet Union's international image. Finally Cuba's revolutionary foreign policy jeopardizes the growing rapprochement between the Soviets and the United States, since Washington holds Moscow accountable for Havana's behavior.[31]

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[29]Alexander Baryshev, "A Soviet View: U.S.-Cuban Warming Overdue," The Times of the Americas, 21 February 1990, p. 21.

[30]The Times of the Americas reports that the Soviet Union is hinting it may scale back its economic and military aid to Cuba. "Although [Bush administration] officials warned the statements made by Soviet representatives were vague, they said the indications were good that the Soviets would cut back their aid to Castro" ("Soviet Aid May Be Cut," The Times of the Americas, July 11, 1990, p. 3).

[31]Susan Kaufman Purcell, pp. 115-116. See also Wayne S. Smith, "Washington and Havana: Time for Dialogue," World Policy Journal 7 (Summer 1990): 557-573.

Even without a shift in the Soviet's policy toward Cuba, Soviet-Cuban trade has become increasingly unpredictable since 1988 when, as part of *perestroika*, Soviet enterprises obtained the right to trade directly on foreign markets. This has meant that Cuba has had to deal directly with individual Soviet enterprises, which prefer to sell to customers who pay in hard currency. According to V. Zaikin, Head of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations Department of Economic Cooperation with the Republic of Cuba, "Today, if Soviet enterprises have alternatives, they are not interested in supplying goods to Cuba."[32]

The impact of these new arrangements on Cuba was clearly visible by the spring 1990, when a delay in a shipment of Soviet wheat and flour forced President Castro to cut the bread ration and increase some food prices. The relatively short delay in the shipment of wheat and flour--ships scheduled to arrive in December 1989 were unable to complete their deliveries until January 22, 1990--forced the Cuban government to buy 20,000 tons of wheat from western countries for hard currencies.[33] While some have argued that these delays

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[32]See "There's Plenty of Experience," The Current Digest of The Soviet Press 42 (November 1990): 26.

[33]See Purcell, p. 117. See also "Who's at Fault?" The Current Digest of the Soviet Press 42 (February 1990): 26-27.

constitute Soviet pressure on Cuba to soften its anti-*perestroika* stand and abandon its "Stalinist" policies, others attribute the delays to management decisions to use ships for more profitable business before attending to Cuba's needs.[34] Jorge Dominguez concurs. "The trade breakdowns are caused by the accumulating economic incapacities of the Soviet Union. There is no proof of intent to pressure Cuba politically."[35] Regardless of intent, the fact that a brief delay in the arrival of wheat and flour was so quickly translated into widespread shortages, rationing and price increases highlights Cuba's extreme vulnerability to the ripple effects of *perestroika*.

Similarly, even without a change in Soviet-Cuban economic relations, the collapse of communism in East Europe will eventually prove more destabilizing to Cuba in the short run than will Soviet *perestroika*. In January 1990 the Soviet government announced that beginning in 1991 all of Cuba's transactions with CMEA members would be conducted in hard currency at world-

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[34]See Paul Lewis, "As Shipments of Soviet Grain Lag, Cuba Reduces Daily Bread Ration," New York Times, 7 February 1990, p. 3. See also "Problems Looming With Old Partners," Latin America Weekly Report, 22 February 1990, p. 4.

[35]See Paul Lewis, p. 3.

market prices.[36] This development coincides with a Soviet call for a radical restructuring of the CMEA which would introduce market relations and "bring our economic ties more closely in line with world conditions." N. I. Ryzhkov, speaking at the forty-fifth session of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in January 1990, proposed a radical restructuring of the entire system of economic cooperation which would entail

> [a] shift to economic methods, [and] . . . market relations, [and] the use of freely convertible currency in the settlement of accounts, and of world market prices in reciprocal trade. . . . [T]his would make it possible to put cooperation within the CMEA on a new economic basis and to bring its conditions closer to those that are generally accepted in world practice, a step that would be in keeping with the reforms being carried out in the CMEA countries and would make possible their effective inclusion in the international division of labor.[37]

Given Cuba's extreme dependence on the CMEA a restructuring which would introduce market forces could be devastating. Cuba's Vice Chairman of the State Council and Council of Ministers, C. R. Rodriguez, has agreed with the need to restructure the CMEA. However, he argues that the introduction of market forces must

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[36]This has prompted Ramon Gonzalez Vergara, former Cuban vice-secretary to the CMEA to ask "Will Castro Survive if Cuba is Forced to Pay Its Bills?" Wall Street Journal, 28 September 1990, p. 15.

[37]See "A Historic Rethink is Afoot in CMEA," The Current Digest of The Soviet Press 42 (January 1990): 12-13.

not mean that market forces usurp the principles on which the CMEA is based.[38] Exacerbating Cuba's economic woes is the fact that "in contrast to the Soviet Union, the new Eastern European governments feel no gratitude or responsibility toward Cuba."[39] In January 1990 President Castro acknowledged this new reality, telling the Sixteenth Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions that

> for decades our five-year and annual plans were based on the existence of a Socialist camp . . . with which we established extensive economic relations. The socialist camp today does not exist politically. We will not lie to ourselves. We hope that some of the existing trade agreements will still be honored . . . [but] we have no security and can have no security.[40]

Susan Kaufman Purcell reports that the impact of Eastern Europe's democratic revolutions is already being felt in Cuba.

> Factories have closed; transportation and construction which depend on imports from Eastern Europe are in decline; workers are having difficulty getting to their jobs and, if and when they arrive, they often remain idle because some crucial import or spare part is unavailable; consumer goods such as toothpaste and razor blades are in short

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[38]See "'New Model' CMEA Wins General Acceptance in Principle," The Current Digest of The Soviet Press 42 (January 1990): 14.

[39]Ibid.

[40]A full text of Castro's speech to the Sixteenth Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions on 28 January 1990 is found in Granma Weekly Review, 11 February 1990, p. 2.

> supply, and interminable waits for television sets awarded to model workers have become commonplace.[41]

Moreover, in a recent speech outlining what might lie ahead, Castro acknowledged that an agreement with Bulgaria for 12,000 tons of poultry had not been signed. The same is true with an agreement with Czechoslovakia to provide barley. Castro added that buses and spare parts from Hungary may not arrive and that Cuba could not count on receiving parts for their Czechoslovak thermoelectric plants.[42]

In order to cushion the economic blow, Castro has been actively pursuing other trading partners, especially in Latin America. In 1989 Cuba increased its trade with Mexico (a new economic cooperation agreement was signed in October 1988 which covered 149 projects, including almost all economic areas as well as education and research), Venezuela (in January 1989 Cuba signed a three-year trade agreement with Venezuela, the first between the two countries), Brazil (trade between Cuba and Brazil has grown from virtually zero to $80 million in the past two years, almost all of which consists of Brazilian exports to Cuba), and Peru (a one-year renewable agreement was signed with Peru in August 1989

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[41]Purcell, p. 118.

[42]Ibid.

which commits each nation to seek balanced trade at a level of $10 million each).[43]

Cuba has also begun to woo Japanese investors in the hope of securing Japanese supplies of raw materials and spare parts to reopen idle industrial plants as well as Japanese investments in tourism.[44] And with China the Castro regime has discovered a renewed affinity: opposition to the reforms of the USSR and Eastern Europe. "This is already emerging as the basis for better trade links: over the past year Chinese goods have been appearing more frequently on Cuban shop shelves."[45] Moreover, in late March 1990 the PRC agreed to provide Cuba with a ten-year interest-free loan to aid "simple projects easily implemented."[46]

Despite these moves towards economic diversification, as long as the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba survives it will be difficult for Cuba to end its economic dependence on the USSR and Eastern Europe. This means that even without a conscious Soviet policy

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[43]See Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report: Cuba, nos. 1-4 (1989). This process of diversification was praised by President Gorbachev in his April 1989 trip to Cuba.

[44]See Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report: Cuba, no. 2 (1989): 31-32.

[45]Latin America Weekly Report, 22 February 1990.

[46]"China Gives Cuba Ten-Year Interest-Free Loan," Granma Weekly Review, 2 April 1990, p. 1.

to alter Soviet-Cuban economic relations, the economic changes set in motion by *perestroika* will increase the economic isolation of Cuba and may increase domestic pressures within Cuba for economic reform. History may prove that because of the "other factors" to which Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin referred when in Cuba in April 1990--factors such as socialist solidarity and, perhaps more importantly, the institutional interests of the Soviet military in not losing their strategic outpost in the Western Hemisphere--the Gorbachev leadership may not dramatically alter Soviet relations with Cuba in the short run.[47] However, one must wonder how long a revolutionary state convinced of its historical mission will continue to enjoy the largess of a superpower which no longer speaks in universal terms, seeks accommodation with the United States, and is rapidly turning its attention from adventurism to internal rebuilding.

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[47]Gillian Gunn, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment and a Cuba specialist, posits that "however warm the Moscow-Washington relationship has become, it is unlikely that Gorbachev could convince his military to sacrifice its valuable assets in Cuba in the near future" (Gillian Gunn, "Will Castro Fall?" Foreign Policy 79 [Summer 1990]: 135).

Castro's Response To Perestroika

From the perspective of the Cuban leadership, the world has become an increasingly hostile place. Former allies in the socialist world are accepting reforms or being thrown out of office; the Soviet Union is withdrawing from its commitment to socialist internationalism; U.S.-Soviet relations have improved without a commensurate warming of U.S.-Cuban relations; and Cuban-Americans are confident that the fall of the Castro regime is imminent.[48] The Cuban perception is that the socialist world is in crisis largely due to the success of a long-term imperialist strategy of undermining socialism from within. This has been compounded by "some errors that might have been committed which, in Cuba, [are] being eliminated through the process of rectification of errors and negative tendencies."[49] Castro has made it clear, however, that while nations "[have] the right to evolve from socialism to capitalism . . . nothing and nobody will make Cuba deviate from the socialist path."[50] In his New Year's address to the Cuban people in January 1990 Castro

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[48]On this latter point see David E. Pitt, "Dreaming of an End to Castro, Cubans in Miami are Abuzz," The New York Times, 19 February 1990, p. 1.

[49]Quoted in "Developments in Eastern Europe put Cuba's Castro on the Defensive," Latin American Regional Reports: Caribbean, 25 January 1990, p. 1.

[50]Ibid.

declared that "if fate were to decree that one day, we would be among the last defenders of socialism . . . we would defend this bulwark to the last drop of blood."[51]

In general, Fidel Castro's response to Soviet *perestroika* and to the changes it has engendered has been characterized by bravado and contempt for the reformers in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Behind this harsh rhetoric however, one can discern a multi-faceted strategy which attempts to defuse or repress demands for reform of the island's Castro-style socialism and Marxist-Leninist political structures. Castro's response to *perestroika* begins with the creation of a siege atmosphere at home which is used to both justify the refusal to liberalize politically and to demand greater sacrifices from the Cuban people. This is coupled with a potent mix of appeals to revolutionary idealism and Cuban nationalism, increased "democracy" for pro-Castro loyalists, heightened repression of dissidents, and an active policy on the part of the maximum leader of going to the people in order to bolster morale and improve his image.

A common theme which runs through the public pronouncements of President Castro, especially since December 1989, is that his island nation is at imminent

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[51]Quoted in Michael D. Barnes, "A Visit to Havana," The Times of the Americas, 21 February 1990, p. 20.

risk at the hands of either the United States or the nation's erstwhile friends and allies. This siege atmosphere is created to justify both the refusal to liberalize politically and the demand for greater popular sacrifice. In late 1989, on the occasion of the return of Cuba's dead from its African campaigns, Castro equated their death in the service of the revolution with the effort now required of Cubans to defend the revolution. "They died for socialism," Castro declared. "We will be able to follow their example. . . . Socialism or death!"[52]

Most often the threat to the revolution is described as emanating from the United States. At a press conference for Cuban and foreign journalists given on April 3, 1990 President Castro asserted that

> the U.S. government . . . is experiencing a great euphoria stemming not just from the events in Panama or Nicaragua, but stemming from the events that took place in the Eastern European countries. The United States can't contain its idea at this time, its feeling of being the master of the world. . . . They can't hide their euphoria. That's what led them to invade Panama. . . . The United States is intervening everywhere. One day it decides that Libya must be bombed, so it bombs Libya. Another day it decides that Lebanon must be bombed, so it bombs Lebanon. It's no longer a matter of U.S. philosophy implying the right to intervene in Latin America, but the right to intervene anywhere in the world. . . . [W]e know that as a consequence of all that, we're now forced to confront some dangers, because

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[52]Quoted in Gunn, p. 140.

> the U.S. policy toward Cuba has lately grown more aggressive and more threatening.[53]

On July 26, 1990, in an address commemorating the thirty-seventh anniversary of the assault on the Moncada Garrison, President Castro made his case even more strongly, arguing that "Cuba is a country constantly threatened by the imperialists. . . ." For President Bush, Cuba is "a sick obsession."

> Cuba is everywhere. When Bush has breakfast in the morning there must be a Cuba in his coffee, in the water or the bread. He never forgets Cuba neither awake nor asleep. It's a sick obsession and a disgrace for the world. Even the allies of the United States in Europe ask how far these crazy people will go? But their intentions are obvious.[54]

With the increasing friendship between the U.S. and the USSR, Castro believes that the U.S. "sees Cuba as the enemy par excellence." Cuba, he argues, "stands in the way" of U.S. plans for the hemisphere and for the Third World in general. Cuba is "the irritating thorn, the bone in [the U.S.] throat." Hence, "more than ever before [the United States] harasses Cuba, threatens Cuba."[55]

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[53]A full text of the press conference is found in Granma Weekly Review, 22 April 1990, pp. 2-5.

[54]A full text of Castro's address is found in Granma Weekly Review, 5 August 1990, pp. 3-5.

[55]See the transcript of President Castro's meeting with Christian Base Communities in Brazil 17 March 1990, reprinted in Granma Weekly Review, 8 April 1990, pp. 7-12.

> U.S. battleships and aircraft carriers keep hovering around our country. The U.S. rulers are arrogant and have gone mad; emboldened and euphoric, they think socialism no longer exists--which makes them more aggressive, more dangerous. This is the beginning of a new era, a new stage. These may be times of very challenging tests for our people.[56]

In the face of increased U.S. aggression, Castro has called upon his people to defend "the ideological and military trenches of the revolution."

> If in the future we are given the role of being one of the last bastions of socialism, in a world in which the U.S. embodies Hitler's imperialist dream,we will know how to defend it. . . . [W]e prefer to die rather than be slaves and go back to being dominated by the United States. . . . Cowards surrender, not revolutionaries. . . . [Hence] Cuba won't be as easy to overcome as the United States thinks.[57]

Castro has blamed the "half-hearted" condemnation by Latin American countries of the U.S. invasion of Panama for Washington's growing "arrogance, prepotency, and aggressiveness." But it is not only sworn enemies of the revolution that appear to be conspiring against Cuba. Castro has been enraged by the "repugnant attitude" of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and even Bulgaria in voting with the U.S. in the United Nations Human Rights Commission to put Cuba on its watch list.

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[56]Speech given by President Castro to the Sixteenth Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions, January 28, 1990. Full text is found in Granma Weekly Review 11 February 1990, pp. 2-4.

[57]See transcript of Castro's meeting with Christian Base Communities, Granma Weekly Review 8 April 1990.

He has said that these "ex-Socialist countries" will be responsible for the bloodbath if the U.S. invades Cuba.[58]

Cuba's declining economic conditions have led the island's maximum leader to call for increased sacrifices by the nation's people, justifying these as necessary in an increasingly hostile world. The government's recent decision to conserve Cuba's fast-diminishing oil stocks by closing the Ernesto Guevara nickel plant in Moa and cutting by 50 percent the supply of petrol and diesel oil to both the state sector and private consumers was justified in light of the "[uncertain] conditions under which we will receive oil in the future."[59] Similarly, in August 1990 Castro warned his countrymen that draconian austerity measures would have to be imposed if the USSR was no longer willing or able to go on supplying an annual 90 million barrels of subsidized petroleum. By early August 1990 the Soviet Union was

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[58]See "Friends Become Foes as Cuba Refuses to Accept Moscow's `New Thinking'," Latin American Regional Reports: Caribbean 5 April 1990, p. 1.

[59]The indefinite shutdown of the Ernesto Guevara nickel plant in Moa will cause a major disruption of supplies of the metal to the Soviet Union, which normally takes the entire production of the plant, some 15,000 tons a year. See "Special Measures for Fuel Shortage," Granma Weekly Review 9 September 1990, p. 9; and "Production Halted at Moa Nickel Plant," Latin American Regional Report: Caribbean 4 October 1990, p. 7.

already 50 percent behind the agreed quota of 13.3 tons of oil for 1990.[60]

President Castro has argued that in this period of economic hardship Cubans "have to implement more than ever that principle of the Three Musketeers: One for all and all for one!"[61] Cuba's deteriorating economic relations with the USSR and Eastern Europe

> are what the imperialists are hoping for, it's one of their great hopes. . . . [O]ne of the imperialists' biggest hopes is that the Eastern European problems or the problems of the Soviet Union will deprive Cuba of resources that are essential, that are indispensable for development. . . . [However] the imperialists underestimate us if they believe that the Revolution can be defeated in any field: in the military or the economic field. . . . I believe that seldom before, probably never, have our people made bigger or more resolute efforts in the history of the Revolution.[62]

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[60]See "Politics and Diplomacy: Blowing Hot and Cold on Spain," Latin American Weekly Report, 9 August 1990, p. 3. Some austerity measures already adopted include:

- -asking office workers to switch off their air conditioners
- -replacing tractors with oxen in some areas of the countryside
- -extending the tours of duty for military draftees in order to help the army become self-sufficient in food
- -ordering the halt of all housing construction projects.

See also "Special Measures Taken Because of Fuel Shortage," Granma Weekly Review, 9 September 1990, p. 9.

[61]See speech given by President Castro at the ceremony to present the Blas Roca Construction Contingent with the National Vanguard flag, 3 June 1990. Text found in Granma Weekly Review, 17 June 1990, p. 3.

[62]Ibid.

These same concerns with imminent imperialist attack on the Revolution are used to justify Castro's unwillingness to engage in meaningful democratic reform. While President Castro's position traditionally has been that elections are unnecessary in revolutionary Cuba since "In Cuba . . . we have our own type of elections,"[63] he has recently been more vocal in his denunciations of the world-wide movement toward increased political pluralism. In a January 28, 1990 address to the Sixteenth Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions Castro lamented the growing fragmentation in "societies that are . . . going down the beaten path of western and capitalist philosophy."[64] This fragmentation, he asserts, plays into the hands of U.S. imperialism.

> How wonderful for U.S. imperialism . . . that our societies are fragmenting into a thousand pieces! How wonderful to keep us backward, oppressed, exploited and dominated! What would the imperialists give to divide our people into two, three, or 100 fragments! How easy it would then be for them to land here and then trample underfoot the hearts of our people! How wonderful it would be for Imperialism if this small country which has opposed it in such a resolute, courageous and determined manner for so many years could be easily defeated and occupied!. . . [However] in these times, when it seems like a crime to talk about socialism, and even more of a crime to talk about communism . . . there can be no

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[63]See "Quayle Chides Castro but Fidel Gets Limelight," Los Angeles Times, 16 March 1990, p. 2.

[64]Granma Weekly Review, 11 February 1990, p. 2.

> doubt about [Cuban unity] around revolutionary ideas, around the most just social concept ever known to humanity, that of socialism and communism. . . .[65]

Castro's concerns have been echoed by Carlos Aldana, secretary of the Cuban Communist party's central committee, who in June 1990 confirmed that multiple political parties will not be tolerated in Cuba. "Cuba cannot afford the luxury of opposition parties knowing that, on our own soil, they will represent the interests of the United States."[66] In a similar vein, the Communist party's political bureau issued a statement on June 23, 1990 in which it reaffirmed "the idea of a sole, Marti-style and Marxist-Leninist party," and rejected "the new reactionary dogma that there is no democracy and renovation without multiple parties." After all, a multi-party system was "used by imperialism to apply its neo-colonial dominance" in the past.[67]

In this context of increased danger President Castro has appealed to the revolutionary idealism of the Cuban people and has increasingly equated Castroism with Cuban nationalism. Castro's appeals to revolutionary idealism can be traced back to the Communist party's

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[65]Ibid.

[66]Quoted in "Castro Regime not prepared to discuss `Imperialist' Multi-Party System," Latin American Regional Reports: Caribbean, 26 July 1990, p. 1.

[67]Ibid.

1986 decision to "rectify" the "methods and principles" applied in the running of the economy.[68] Cuban rectification did away with the limited market mechanisms previously introduced into the economy and called for movement away from the "bourgeois liberal" tendencies of the last ten years and for a "moralization" of the domestic economy. To this end the politburo, meeting in emergency session, approved new measures which include:

> -The end of private construction and sales of homes;
> -A clampdown on artists, painters, craftsmen and tradesmen selling their work privately, as well as on street vendors, lorry owners and unofficial restaurants;
> -A police clampdown on "anti-social" elements;
> -The creation of an official ministry charged with the elimination of corruption and inefficiency from the economy;
> -A revival of moral incentives and voluntary work.[69]

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[68]For a detailed discussion of Cuban Rectification policies see Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Cuba in the 1970s, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981); Carmelo Mesa-Lago, The Economy of Socialist Cuba: A Two Decade Appraisal, (Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press, 1981); Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "The Cuban Economy in the 1980s: The Return of Ideology," in Socialist Cuba: Past Interpretations and Future Challenges, ed. Sergio Roca (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 59-100; Andrew Zimbalist and Susan Eckstein, "Patterns of Cuban Development: The First Twenty-Five Years," in Cuba's Socialist Economy: Toward the 1990s, ed. Andrew Zimbalist (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1987), pp. 7-21.

[69]See "Politics: Liberal Reforms Outdated," Latin American Regional Report: Caribbean, 24 July 1986, p. 4.

President Castro argued that these measures were essential if the mistaken course of the revolution, which was leading Cuba not toward socialism and communism but "to a system worse than capitalism," was to be corrected.[70] Castro asked for popular support against "people who are apparently great Marxists, well versed in Marxism, but who have a capitalistic or petty bourgeois soul," Marxists who have "a blind faith in economic mechanisms and [a belief] that socialism can be built with mechanisms" rather than trusting moral incentives and the revolutionary spirit of the population.[71] More recently, President Castro has been quick to praise the revolutionary idealism of workers and young people. In separate addresses to construction workers in May and June 1990 Castro emphasized the need for continued hard work in order to defend the revolution in an increasingly hostile international environment.[72] "All of you are like a flag flying high in these heroic and glorious times . . . you are the

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[70]Speech given by Fidel Castro at the close of the Deferred Session of the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba on December 2, 1986 reprinted in Granma Weekly Review, 5 December 1986.

[71]Ibid.

[72]See "Blas Roca Construction Contingent Awarded High Labor Distinction," Granma Weekly Review, 10 June 1990, p. 9; and "Fidel In The Inauguration of the Paradiso And Sol Palmeras Hotels," Granma Weekly Review, 27 May 1990, pp. 2-3.

proof of what socialism is, of what socialism can be, of the superiority of socialism," said Castro in closing the ceremony to present the Blas Roca Construction Contingent with the 1989 National Vanguard Flag, awarded by the construction workers' national trade union.[73] Similarly, in an address to the second meeting of the Young Communist League on April 28, 1990, President Castro urged young people to continue to make ideological work their top priority, for, in the words of General of the Army Raul Castro,

> the upsetting world situation has heightened the tension for our Revolution in all fields and represents a great challenge that requires of us . . . profound reflection and a thoughtful, creative response.[74]

Castro is also working hard to equate his version of socialism with Cuban nationalism. In a December 1989 speech Castro argued that "In Cuba, revolution, socialism and national independence are insolubly linked. If capitalism returned some day to Cuba, our independence and sovereignty would disappear forever. We would be an extension of Miami."[75] In making his case that "if the Revolution were defeated . . . it

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[73]See "Blas Roca... ," Granma Weekly Review, 10 June 1990, p. 9; and "Fidel Speaks to Blas Roca Contingent," Granma Weekly Review, 17 June 1990, p. 3.

[74]See "Young Communist League's Work Must be Profound and Dynamic," Granma Weekly Review, 13 May 1990, p. 5.

[75]Quoted in Gunn, p. 140.

would mean the end to our country's independence [since] . . . Revolution, independence and sovereignty are inseparable in Cuba,"[76] Castro has also invoked the images of revered Cuban nationalists.

> [We are] on the eve of critical tests. If those tests come, we can tell Marti that now, more than ever, we need his thoughts, his ideas and his virtues. To Marti, Maceo and all the others like them we also say that now, more than ever, we are proud of being their followers, of being their faithful, unconditional disciples, and we reaffirm two immortal slogans which link Marx, Lenin and Engels with Marti, Maceo, Cespedes and all the other heroes of our independence and freedom: Socialism or Death! *Patria o Muerte*! *Venceremos*![77]

Another aspect of Castro's strategy designed to ward off the political changes associated with *perestroika* is to increase "democracy" for his supporters by providing them with increased channels to express their views while staying within the limits of Castro's own vision of a communist order. The new initiatives are an attempt to make the state and party structures more efficient and responsive to the concerns of those loyal to the existing system. They are not designed to accommodate the concerns of dissidents or to

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[76]See the text of the speech given by Castro during a meeting with Brazilian intellectuals in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 18 March 1990, reprinted in Granma Weekly Review, 15 April 1990, pp. 2-5.

[77]See Castro's speech at the closing session of the Sixteenth Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions on 28 January 1990, reprinted in Granma Weekly Review, 11 February 1990, pp. 2-4.

create additional space for free market mechanisms. Evidence of this new element of Castro's strategy appeared in January 1990 when Cuba announced that henceforth delegates to local Communist party organizations in workplaces would be chosen by secret ballot from candidates to be selected by the workers themselves. Previously delegates had been chosen from a list drawn up by the party with a show of hands.[78] In February 1990 the Central Committee announced it would begin a process of "perfecting" institutions while maintaining a "single, Leninist party based on the principles of democratic centralism."[79] According to Cuban sources, one of the "formalities" that may be "eradicated" is the tendency of the National Assembly to rubber-stamp party decisions. Also under consideration is the direct election of Assembly delegates.[80]

This movement toward limited liberalization was furthered in June 1990 when the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party issued a long note which spoke of the "exceptionally difficult and dangerous situation"

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[78]Gunn, p. 141.

[79]"Cubans Outline Plan to `Perfect' Communist Rule," New York Times, 18 February 1990, p. 9; "Hard-Line Cubans Consider Reforms," Boston Globe, 18 February 1990, p. 2; "Impending Change: `Participation' with Strict PCC Control," Latin American Regional Report: Caribbean, 1 March 1990, p. 4.

[80]Gunn, p. 141.

faced by the Revolution under present circumstances of unprecedented ideological and psychological pressure and called for a broad national debate to achieve "ever more democratic operations of political and state institutions."[81] While positing that the nation's commitment to "a single party based on Marti and Marxism-Leninism . . . can't be questioned," the Political Bureau's memo states that

> our firmness in the defense of socialism doesn't mean being closed-minded or resisting an analysis of logical transformations for which conditions have matured in the political life of the country. We want to get different ideas, suggestions and views which can later be matured and enriched. . . . The debate may cover any aspect of the internal functioning of the Party such as recruitment, ways of joining, methods of choosing candidates and the election of leading bodies with the clear purpose of finding more democratic alternatives which assure greater support by members for their leaders. . . . The value of a well-founded and objective national debate of political clarification is that it will enable the Party to understand much more objectively the true state of feelings, opinions and concerns existing in the country. Therefore, we should not express regret if views which until now were inhibited or repressed come to the fore, and we have the possibility and opportunity to discuss, provide evidence and put an end to confusion and errors. Nor should we be surprised if tendencies dominant in the catastrophe in Eastern Europe emerge in one way or the other in the debates. This . . . will help us clarify essential concepts of democracy, social justice, human rights and freedom.[82]

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[81]"Communist Party Promotes Broad National Debate," Granma Weekly Review, 1 July 1990, p. 1.

[82]Ibid.

In early October 1990 the leadership of the Party announced that it would introduce direct, secret voting and multiple candidates in elections for municipal and provincial party committees scheduled to be held between November 1990 and February 1991. Arguing that it could not wait for the coming fourth party congress in early 1991 to introduce the changes, the national leadership also announced that it was slashing national and provincial party posts by fifty percent and reorganizing the powerful Central Committee Secretariat. The party should in this way be an example of rigorous application of the principle of not using a single employee more than is strictly necessary.[83]

Increased Castro-style "democracy" for loyalists is being balanced by more intense repression of dissidents. On March 12, 1989 the Cuban security police rousted at least eleven human-rights advocates from their beds in a series of early-morning raids, searching homes and confiscating papers and books. The Cuban leadership asserted that seven of the dissidents were arrested because they sent a congratulatory letter to the United States delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Committee hailing the passage of a resolution that implicitly criticized the Castro Government for acts of

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[83]"Cuban Communist Party is Moving to Slash its Bureaucracy by Half," New York Times, 7 October 1990, p. 9.

political repression.[84] Cuba has also admitted that approximately 30 people who testified to the UN Human Rights Committee that visited Cuba in September 1988 have been detained or imprisoned.

> Among the most notable recent detentions are four members of Cuba's Union of Communist Youth, who were arrested after they complained about the lack of democracy in Cuba and Castro's "personality cult"; the head of the Cuban Party for Human Rights, Samuel Martinez Lara, jailed for nine months following his attempt to organize a demonstration in favor of *perestroika* during Gorbachev's visit to Havana in the spring of 1989; human rights activist Elizardo Sanchez, imprisoned for two years and two of his colleagues for one and a half years each, after they criticized the trial and execution of Ochoa.[85]

A final element of Castro's strategy may turn out to be the most important, but it is also the hardest to quantify. Castro is seeking to enhance his image by making almost frequent appearances all over the island. "His bantering, irreverent style is well received by some Cubans who still regard him as the revolutionary who forced out a corrupt dictator, who guaranteed education, health care, and basic food and housing and who turned Cuba into a mini-power."[86] While tarnished abroad, Castro hopes that his rule is still considered legitimate by many at home and that Cubans are committed

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[84]David E. Pitt, "Cuba Said to Seize 11 Rights Advocates," New York Times, 13 March 1990, p. 3.

[85]Gunn, p. 142.

[86]Ibid., p. 143.

to him as maximum leader and embodiment of the Revolution.

Conclusions

Castro's survival strategy, which combines increased political participation for loyalists, heightened repression of dissidents and the use of rhetoric which harkens back to earlier periods in the revolution's history and demands sacrifices like those that were necessary to protect the Revolution in its first years, attempts to maintain the island's Castro-style socialism and Marxist-Leninist political structures in an increasingly hostile environment. The success of the strategy may depend upon two interrelated factors: the extent of the hardship engendered by Cuba's economic isolation and the severity of the austerity measures imposed by the Castro government; and the degree to which President Castro is able to use his charismatic leadership to mobilize the nation in support of the Revolution.

The Cuban economy has for years been plagued by inefficiency and bureaucracy. Consumers have had to contend with long lines, shoddily produced goods and frequent shortages of items. The recent changes in the socialist world have exacerbated these problems and brought these long-standing shortcomings to a head.

From the perspective of the revolutionary government, this already bleak situation is intensified by the fact that Cubans rarely compare their economic conditions with those of Dominicans or Haitians. Their main point of reference "is the United States, particularly their relatives in Miami."[87] Another reference point is the recent past, yet in the last few years the standard of living has deteriorated.[88] Eugenio Balari, head of the Cuban Institute of Internal Demand, the government agency charged with researching consumer needs, asserts that "we are no longer talking about increasing levels of consumption. Our goal now is to hold the line at 1984 levels."[89] Moreover, the dramatic drop in Eastern European trade and the new economic relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union have required the adoption of

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[87]Medea Benjamin, "Things Fall Apart," NACLA: Report on the Americas 24 (August 1990): 15.

[88]Andrew Zimbalist attributes the decline in the Cuban economy in the mid-1980s to "low sugar prices, plummeting petroleum prices (Cuba's re-export of Soviet petroleum provided roughly 40 percent of its hard currency earnings during 1983-1985), devastation from Hurricane Kate, several consecutive years of intensifying drought, drastic dollar devaluation, the tightening of the U.S. embargo and growing protectionism in Western markets, [which] all combined to reduce Cuba's hard currency earnings by 337.1 million, or 27.1 percent" (quoted in Ibid.). As of 1986 Cuba was unable to make further payment of its debt to the West. New loans dried up, and Cuba cut Western imports drastically. Cuba was forced once again to depend on the socialist CMEA.

[89]Quoted in Benjamin, p. 15.

severe austerity measures which further deteriorate the standard of living of the majority of Cubans. The Cuban government is bracing its people for a "special period in peacetime," a period which will require wartime economic measures, a period which may bring a precipitous decline in living standards.

Juan M. del Aguila argues that the popular unrest engendered by the economic crisis will be bolstered by increased "social fatigue and political disillusionment [as well as a growing sense of not] `being on the right side of history'" as Cubans discover the changes occurring elsewhere in the socialist world.

> Despite government efforts to censor reports of what is happening in parts of the communist world, information about it reaches the public via the Voice of America's Radio Marti and other outlets. . . . It is impossible to determine what impact this information has on the political elite or sophisticated technocrats and other policy makers, but there is no doubt that comparisons between the situation in Cuba and transformations underway in the communist world force individuals to rethink why the Cuban system is stuck and where it is headed.[90]

These developments have led many within the Cuban exile community as well as significant numbers of commentators in the mainstream press to assert that it is only a matter of time before Castro falls in an

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[90]Juan M. del Aguila, "Cuba: Guarding the Revolution," in Glasnost, Perestroika and the Socialist Community, eds. Charles Bukowski and J. Richard Walsh (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 79-80.

Eastern Europe-style popular uprising. However, the link between economic deprivation and popular revolt may not be so clear-cut in the Cuban case. The optimism expressed in the popular media and among exiles is based on the incorrect assumption that communism in Cuba is as despised as it is in Eastern Europe. This is not the case, in large part because while communism came to Eastern Europe on the point of Soviet bayonets, in Cuba communism was the result of revolution. Samuel P. Huntington posits that

> revolutionary governments may be undermined by affluence; but they are never overthrown by poverty. Material deprivations, which would have been insufferable under the old regime, are proof of the strength of the new one. The less their food and material comfort the more the people come to value the political and ideological accomplishments of the revolution for which they are suffering so much.[91]

Hence the importance of economic deprivations in creating popular anti-regime unrest is dependent upon the degree to which the Cuban people continue to value and support the Revolution and its charismatic maximum leader.

There is no doubt that the rapid changes that swept through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in late 1989 and 1990 have left many Cubans feeling isolated and confused. "It's as if we spent our whole lives

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[91]Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 309-310.

believing in God, then suddenly we woke up one day and discovered that God didn't exist," explains a Cuban high school teacher.[92] The demise of communism has also had a sobering effect on the revolutionary leadership as evidenced by the movement toward increased political participation and "democracy," albeit within the framework of a one-party system. Similarly, Castro's hard-line position appears to have had the effect of increasing dissent within Cuban society.

Much of the evidence employed to make the case that anti-Castro sentiment is on the rise is anecdotal. Gillian Gunn reports that

> the U.S. Coast Guard says it picked up five times as many refugees in the waters between Cuba and Florida in 1989 as in 1988. Juvenile delinquency is rising, and last year it was reported that in a Havana cinema youths began to hum the song "This Man is Crazy, He Thinks He Rules The World" when a newsreel showing Castro was shown.[93]

In a similar vein, Medea Benjamin reports that "bitter sarcastic underground jokes" are circulating through Cuba.[94] Compounding these feelings of dissent is the

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[92]Quoted in Medea Benjamin, p. 23.

[93]Gunn, p. 144.

[94]One has Fidel, his brother Raul and a pilot flying over Cuba. "I think I'll throw out a 20 peso bill and make some Cuban happy," says Fidel. "Why don't you throw out two 10 peso bills and make two Cubans happy?" suggests Raul. "Or I could throw out four 5 peso bills and make four Cubans happy," responds Fidel. The pilot turns around and says "Why don't you throw yourselves out and make 10 million Cubans happy"

lasting impact of the "Ochoa scandal." In July 1989 Major General Arnoldo Ochoa and three other officers were found guilty of drug trafficking and were executed by firing squad. "For years the United States had been accusing Cuban officials of drug dealing, and we yelled and screamed that it was just Yankee propaganda to discredit the revolution," explained a Cuban who had fought for two years in Angola under Ochoa's command.

> You can imagine how we felt when we discovered some of those accusations were true! And Cuba is not like the United States, where you can separate individuals from the government because the government changes every four years. Here those individuals are the government, and their activities reflect on the system as a whole.[95]

Juan M. del Aguila argues that there exist anti-Castro, pro-reform factions in Cuba's top elite however he provides no proof that such figures exist. Similarly, he posits that dissent within civil society is increasing and that an "underground political subculture," which often works through human rights groups and associations, survives in an atmosphere of great hostility.[96] On the other hand, the State Department has reported few overt signs of dissatisfaction. There are no mass anti-government

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(Benjamin, p. 24).

[95]Quoted in Ibid.

[96]del Aguila, p. 74.

demonstrations, nor is there even anti-government graffiti. The lack of overt protest can be explained by the intense repression of dissidents and by the ambivalence of many of Castro's critics. Even del Aguila, in his discussion of dissent in civil society, concedes that "It is impossible to determine whether the values of this subculture reject socialism as such, or only its blatantly dictatorial practices under the Castro regime."[97]

Indeed, Cuban society appears to be increasingly polarized between a shrinking number of what the government calls "revolutionaries" and a expanding number of "counterrevolutionaries." The former take solace in the image of David fighting the Goliath superpowers[98], while the latter

> are not necessarily sympathetic to democratic capitalism . . . [and while] reject[ing] Marxism-Leninism . . . do so from a nationalistic and anti-imperialist posture, looking to the teachings of Jose Marti for their inspiration.[99]

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[97]Ibid., p. 75.

[98]Medea Benjamin describes the views of "Roberto," a proponent of this view: "When I asked if he was worried about a possible cut-off of Soviet trade, Roberto laughed. "You know us Cubans, we've got more cojones than the Soviets and the Yankees rolled together. We thumbed our nose at both superpowers during the missile crisis and we're still here. Our cojones got us where we are today, and they'll see us through the next round" (Benjamin, p. 26).

[99]del Aguila, p. 75.

Caught in the middle are the majority of Cubans. They recognize the benefits of the revolution and consider themselves socialists, but have many complaints about their system. The majority of Cubans are, therefore, quite unlike Eastern Europeans and Soviet communists for they still perceive the Cuban Communist Party led by Fidel as legitimate, albeit in need of reform.

Will this political center hold? Will Castro continue to benefit from Cubans who recognize the benefits of the revolution but who are increasingly in favor of reform and liberalization of the regime's dictatorial rule? Much depends on which of the two patterns now discernable in Cuba wins out: the intransigence of "socialism or death!"; or the gradual political opening and liberalization? Political change in Cuba is inevitable given the radical transformations shaking the socialist world. The question that remains unanswered is will this change come with the PCC in the lead, directing a gradual Cuban-style *perestroika* and *glasnost*, or will the shaky pro-revolution coalition currently backing Fidel crumble in the face of growing hardship and centralized political control.

CHAPTER 5

PERESTROIKA AND THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, in an interview with the official FSLN newspaper Barricada, was asked to discuss the influence Soviet *perestroika* has had on the Sandinista revolution. "I do not see how *perestroika* can exert any influence on the Nicaraguan revolution, which has its own characteristics," he replied.[1] Vice Coordinator of the FSLN Executive Committee Bayardo Arce has put it more directly: "We welcome [the USSR's] new phase of development--*perestroika*."[2]

Unlike the other Marxist-Leninist regime in the Caribbean, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, has never adhered to an orthodox Marxism. Rather, FSLN theorists--from Carlos Fonseca to Daniel Ortega--have stressed the need to shape Marxism to a nation's unique conditions. Hence, from the Sandinista perspective "*perestroika* is the answer to a socialist regime 70 years after its revolution . . . [it] is the result of a socialist regime with 70 years of experience."[3]

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[1]"Daniel Ortega on Peace, Economy, Politics, Plans," Barricada 31 December 1987, p. 1.

[2]"Arce Hails Soviet Revolution, Assistance," FBIS-Latin America 9 November 1987, p. 22.

[3]Daniel Ortega in Barricada 31 December 1987, p. 2.

Sandinista theorists posit that no one could, or should, expect socialism to take the same form everywhere.

As will be discussed below, Sandinista theorists see socialism coming to Nicaragua, because of its unique conditions, in a two-stage process. Interestingly, many of the developments one associates with Soviet politics under Gorbachev--*glasnost*, with its freedom to criticize one's superiors and communicate with one's leaders; economic liberalization in which private enterprise, albeit limited, is valued and seen as a key to the nation's development; increased levels of democracy--are present also in the first phase of Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution.[4] Hence, unlike Castro in Cuba, the Sandinistas, even more pro-Soviet members of the Frente like Minister of Planning Henry Ruiz, seem not to be threatened ideologically by the changes in the Soviet Union and the socialist world.[5]

The assertions of President Ortega and other members of the FSLN notwithstanding, *perestroika* and the changes it has brought to the socialist world have had serious implications for the FSLN. With "the demise of

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[4]According to Daniel Ortega: "Many of the elements being handled within *perestroika* were already part of the Nicaraguan revolution, given the character of our process." Ibid.

[5]"Foreign Cooperation Minister Ruiz on Perestroika," FBIS-Latin America, 19 January 1990, pp. 19-21.

Communism" the flow of aid to the Sandinistas from the socialist world declined, which in turn, exacerbated the economic downturn which was crucial in the Sandinista's electoral defeat in February 1990. Moreover, Soviet foreign policy "new thinking's" emphasis on the interrelated issues of improving relations with the United States and resolving regional conflicts, coupled with the USSR's unwillingness to bankroll another client state in the distant Western Hemisphere, led the USSR to stress the limits of their support for the Nicaraguan revolution. This increased the isolation of Sandinista Nicaragua and had the effect of pressuring the FSLN to pursue peace with the Contras and their U.S. backers.[6]

The FSLN and the Sandinista Revolution

The FSLN was founded in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in July 1961 by three friends and former university students: Carlos Fonseca Amador, Tomas Borge and Silvio Mayorga. Fonseca, who had discovered the writings of Augusto Cesar Sandino early in his student years and would champion Sandino's thought among his fellow revolutionaries, and Borge were introduced to Marxism as high school students in the provincial town of Matagalpa

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[6]Not surprisingly, both nations deny that any pressure was exerted on the FSLN. See "Press Club News Conference," FBIS-Latin America, 13 November 1987, pp. 13-20 and "Soviet Ambassador Comments on Relations," FBIS-Latin America, 19 December 1989, pp. 17-18.

in the early 1950s and read Lenin as students at the national university in Leon. Both joined the youth organization of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), Nicaragua's pro-Moscow Communist party. Fonseca later became a member of the PSN and visited the Soviet Union in 1957 as Nicaragua's only delegate to the Sixth Youth and Student Festival in Moscow. Upon his return Fonseca wrote "A Nicaraguan in Moscow," a pamphlet extolling socialism and giving an idealized account of what he had seen.[7]

Back in Nicaragua, Fonseca renewed his political activism, now working to have his friend Borge, who along with other student leftists was arrested after the 1956 assassination of Somoza Garcia, released from prison. Fonseca was arrested several times and then in 1958 was deported to Guatemala. The victory of Fidel Castro led Fonseca to Cuba in 1959, and thereafter Fonseca began traveling surreptitiously among Cuba, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua, organizing revolutionary opposition to the Somoza regime. The Cuban revolution also reconfirmed to Fonseca, Borge and Mayorga the central importance of the armed struggle in

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[7]Sahily Tabares Hernandez, "*Biografia de Carlos Fonseca Amador*," in Sandino: Guerrillero Proletario, ed. Carlos Fonseca Amador (*Comisión Evangélica Latino Americana de Educación Cristiana*: Lima, 1979), pp. 5-12, and Denis Gilbert, Sandinistas, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 1-19.

the mountains and the need to build sympathetic support among the local peasant population. Put differently, the Cuban revolution reconfirmed the correctness of Sandino's guerrilla war and the incorrectness of the PSN's cautious strategy of peaceful change. "For us," wrote Tomas Borge, "Fidel was the resurrection of Sandino . . . the justification of our dreams."[8]

The neophyte Sandinista guerrillas attempted to transplant the Cuban experience to Nicaraguan soil, and from 1962 to 1967 actually practiced Castro's "foco" strategy. In 1963, a first, unsuccessful guerrilla "foco" was started in the Coco and Bokay River regions in north-eastern Nicaragua. Living conditions at the FSLN base on the Rio Coco on the Honduras-Nicaragua border were appalling. According to Tomas Borge:

> There was nothing to eat, not even animals to hunt. There was no salt. It wasn't just hunger that was terrible, but constant cold 24 hours a day, because we spent all our time in the river. We were always wet through with the clinging rain of that part of the country, the cold a kind of unrelieved torture, mosquitos, wild jungle animals and insects. No shelter, no change of clothes, no food.[9]

Worse still, the non-Spanish speaking Miskito Indian inhabitants of the region did not supply the

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[8]Tomas Borge, Carlos, El Amanecer Ya No Es Una Tentacion, (Managua: SENAPEP, 1979), p. 23. Quoted in George Black, Triumph of the People, (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 76.

[9]Quoted in Black, p. 78.

support the FSLN expected. "To the Miskitos, the difference between the FSLN and Somoza's Guard was hazy. Both wore olive green uniforms and carried guns; neither could communicate with the sparse local population."[10] The 1963 clash between the FSLN "foco" and the National Guard dealt the guerrillas heavy casualties and caused them to retrench militarily for nearly three years in order to develop better urban and rural support systems.

In 1967 another "foco" was launched in the area around the Pancasan mountain, approximately thirty miles east of Matagalpa. Although the Sandinistas received active support from local peasant sympathizers, the outcome for the Sandinistas was inevitable. At the end of August 1967 Somoza's forces located the Pancasan "foco" and the National Guard succeeded in decimating much of the FSLN's rural organization, killing 13 senior members of the leadership, including Silvio Mayorga, as well as their peasant collaborators. Yet unlike the 1963 uprising, the fighting in 1967 spurred worker and student solidarity protests which helped bolster the political authority of the FSLN within Nicaragua.[11]

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[10]Black, p. 78.

[11]A detailed discussion of FSLN tactics at this time is found in Donald C. Hodges, Intellectual Foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 218-224. See also Black, pp. 80-82.

In the wake of this defeat the FSLN abandoned its "*foquismo*" in favor of the Vietnamese-inspired strategy of "protracted people's war," with its greater emphasis on the complementary character of military action and political work among the masses. In 1970 the FSLN's national leadership ordered that the organization go underground and only enter into combat as a last resort. Between 1970 and December 1974, when the Frente began a new offensive, the FSLN concentrated on organizing its supporters. In urban factories, in the universities and in the countryside, the FSLN gained new recruits and collaborators, so that by the Managua earthquake of December 1972 the rebels were in a stronger position to continue their struggle against the Somoza dictatorship.

The 1972 earthquake set off a political crisis that gathered momentum through the remainder of the decade. Rising labor unrest, high inflation, disquiet among the economic elite and growing political dissatisfaction because of Somoza's attempts to engineer his return to the presidency characterized 1973 and 1974. Indeed, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), the country's leading business organization, became one of the regime's most tenacious critics while Catholic Church authorities clashed with Somoza over his control of crucial relief supplies.

In 1974 the FSLN resumed the military offensive, now backed by a stronger organizational network in the cities and countryside and with a seasoned military arm. The return to the offensive began December 27, 1974 with an assault on a party in honor of U.S. Ambassador Turner B. Shelton at the house of Jose Maria Castillo Quant, a wealthy cotton exporter and former Minister of Agriculture. At 10:50 p.m., shortly after the departure of Ambassador Shelton, a well-drilled assault team of thirteen Sandinistas attacked and took the entire party hostage. Following several days of intense negotiations mediated by Archbishop Obando y Bravo, the hostages were released in return for a $2 million ransom, the release of eighteen Sandinistas held prisoner by Somoza, and the publication of lengthy communiques from the FSLN in La Prensa, El Centroamericano, and the government paper Novidades as well as their broadcast on Nicaraguan radio stations.[12]

The hostage-taking of 1974 gave the FSLN a huge symbolic victory, won the freedom of several key Sandinista leaders (including Daniel Ortega Saavedra) and raised a large sum of money, and in its wake the FSLN stepped up both its urban and rural actions. The hostage-taking was also a humiliating defeat for Somoza, one which did not go unanswered. A state of siege was

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[12]Black, pp. 86-88.

declared, and for 33 months the nation suffered under martial law and press censorship. "If Somoza was unable to pull the fish out of the water," wrote a Nicaraguan author describing the state of siege, "he would try to empty the pond or poison it."[13]

> Somoza ordered the Guardia's best counter-insurgency troops to comb every inch of the mountains where the guerrillas operated most freely. To accompany these "search and destroy" missions, aircraft of the Nicaraguan airforce bombed the area, resorting in many cases to the use of napalm and defoliants. Peasant huts were burned out and their crops destroyed, women raped. Half a dozen concentration camps were set up in Matagalpa and Zelaya and another in Chinandega. In April 1976, 100 peasant families disappeared from three northern hamlets, and in November 1977 Nicaraguan and American church sources listed a further 350 peasant disappearances. The number of those who died in the 33 months of the state of siege can never be calculated, but 3000 is a frequent estimate.[14]

The ferocity of Somoza's repression kept the FSLN pinned down in its rural strongholds, and it seemed momentarily as if the movement might have been destroyed. The government's suffocating pressure led to parts of the Frente being isolated from each other as rural guerrilla forces were cut off from urban cadres and as much of the leadership fled the nation or was in hiding. This in turn, engendered a splintering of the

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[13]Quoted in Ibid., p. 88.

[14]Black, p. 89.

FSLN into three distinct factions or "tendencies," each espousing different tactics.

The Proletarian Tendency (TP) was the first to appear, this group emerged from the urban guerrilla front in 1975. Influenced by the intellectual Jaime Wheelock Roman, the Proletarian Tendency sought to broaden the movement's mass base by organizing unions in factories, in poor neighborhoods, and among new classes emerging from industrialization. The TP's adherence to a "traditional Marxist line" would be criticized by the other factions.[15]

The Guerra Popular Prolongada (Popular People's War--GPP) faction has its roots in the original FSLN rural organization. After the defeat at Pancasan, the GPP abandoned the "foco" strategy and preferred the cautious accumulation of forces advocated by Mao Tse-Tung and Vo Nguyen Giap. The other factions criticized

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[15]For example, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, of the Terceristas, in 1978 said of the TP: "They really don't represent the traditions and the content that have characterized the FSLN. . . . The [TP] doesn't transcend propagandism" (quoted in John A. Booth, The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 313).

Excellent discussions of the Proletarian Tendency are found in Hodges, pp. 233-239; Black pp. 92-94; David Nolan, FSLN: The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution, (Coral Gables, FL: Institute of Interamerican Studies-Graduate School of International Studies, University of Miami, 1985), pp. 50-59; "Interview With Jaime Wheelock Roman," Latin American Perspectives 20 (Winter 1979): 121-127.

the GPP as being too cautious militarily and prone to isolate itself from the daily life of the people.[16]

The Terceristas (Third Force) faction appeared in 1976-1977. The Terceristas' leaders, including former GPP members Daniel and Humberto Ortega Saavedra, relaxed the original FSLN's requirement for Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and rapidly increased their ranks with social democratic, social christian and bourgeois recruits, while the leaders remained Marxist-Leninists. The Terceristas were bolder that the other factions in 1977-1978 and they pressed the urban and rural insurrection with vigor. The other tendencies criticized them for excessive boldness if not adventurism, and for a lack of ideological purity.[17]

The FSLN was saved from splitting entirely by the rapid escalation of popular opposition to the Somoza dynasty. As hostility to the regime grew, the internecine battles diminished. In early 1978 mass protests against the killing of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro

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[16]Of the GPP Daniel Ortega said, "They have gone along proposing the accumulation of forces, [but] they go into the jungle and isolate themselves from the daily struggle of the masses" (quoted in Booth, p. 313). See also Black, pp. 94-95; Nolan, pp. 32-49; "Interview With Henry Ruiz (`Modesto')," Latin American Perspectives 20 (Winter 1979): 118-121.

[17]Booth, pp.143-144; Black, pp.95-97; Hodges, pp.239-255; Nolan, pp.60-84; "Interview With Daniel Ortega," Latin American Politics 20 (Winter 1979): 114-118.

and the spontaneous rebellion in Monimbo "revealed a popular revolutionary animus far greater than most FSLN leaders had expected."[18] Again in August, more spontaneous popular uprisings occurred in Matagalpa, Jinotepe and in other cities. By the beginning of September 1978 Tercerista leaders concluded that the revolt was coming with or without them and that they had best put themselves at the head of the movement. On September 9 Tercerista fighters launched a national urban insurrection which was quickly joined by thousands of lightly armed volunteers as well as GPP and TP regulars, despite their initial resistance to the plan. Somoza responded to the insurrection with heavy shelling, bombing and strafing attacks which allowed the Guard to retake each rebel controlled city. These attacks also had the affect of confirming in the minds of most Nicaraguans the view held by Archbishop Obando y Bravo that Somoza "will not go accept by force."[19] This in turn, heightened the political authority of the Sandinista rebels.

The insurrectionary activities of the Nicaraguan people coupled with the expectation of success drew the FSLN back together. On March 3, 1979 representatives of the three Sandinista factions signed a formal

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[18]Booth, p. 144.

[19]Quoted in Gilbert, p. 11.

reunification agreement. Whatever reservations the other factions may have had about the Tercerista tactics to which the document committed them, they were not willing to risk being left behind by history. The agreement established a nine man National Directorate, with three representatives from each faction. The members, who would guide the FSLN for years to come, were Daniel and Humberto Ortega and Victor Tirado for the Terceristas; Borge, Henry Ruiz and Bayardo Arce for the GPP; and Wheelock, Luis Carrion and Carlos Nunez for the TP. The Directorate functioned as a collegial body without a single leader.[20]

During the months between the September insurrection and the Final Offensive of May-July 1979, the FSLN was able to train and arm thousands of guerrilla fighters. According to Humberto Ortega:

> Though 150 of us took part in [the September 1978] insurrection, from that moment on we quickly multiplied into greatly superior numbers--three or four times that number and with the potential to recruit thousands more. Thus we grew in men and we grew in armament, because we seized [weapons] from the enemy.[21]

The Sandinistas also benefitted from a steady flow of munitions donated by Venezuela and Cuba or purchased on international markets and channeled through Panama

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[20]Black, pp. 142-154; Gilbert, p. 11.

[21]Booth, p. 145.

and Costa Rica.[22] The shipments included some heavy arms which would later allow the FSLN to conduct conventional warfare on some fronts. In urban barrios the FSLN was creating a network of civil defense committees, to support guerrillas and meet the emergency needs of the civilian population. Somoza was, at the same time, rearming and expanding the National Guard and in guns and numbers the Guard remained superior to the FSLN. But the odds were improving.

At the end of May the FSLN began its "Final Offensive." The business-led, moderate opposition, operating through the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) backed the uprising with a general strike that closed down enterprises across the country.[23] Volunteers rapidly expanded the ranks of the insurgents and by

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[22]Shirley Christian, Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family, (New York: Random House, 1985), pp. 79-81.

[23]The FAO included middle and upper-middle class reformist opponents to Somoza who called for political democracy, an end to political corruption, freedom to organize, a mild agrarian reform, and broadened social welfare guarantees. The FAO actively sought a negotiated settlement with Somoza from September 1978-January 1979, encouraged by the U.S. and the OAS. Internal concessions to Somoza, his Liberal Party and the National Guard split the FAO in late 1978-early 1979. The growing military power of the FSLN and the FAO's failure to settle with Somoza further hurt the FAO and by early 1979 it had lost its status as the rebel's main political front to the United People's Movement and the National Patriotic Front. The latter, which included unions of various sorts, student groups and lower and middle-class Nicaraguans, were more clearly of the radical left and their agendas were much closer to the FSLN's. See Black, pp. 100-141.

early June the Sandinistas controlled much of the north and were mounting a strong attack with a conventional army from the south. After weeks of brutal combat, the government managed to dislodge Sandinista forces from their stronghold in the militant, working class neighborhoods of east Managua. But the FSLN continued to advance from the north and south so that by mid-July they controlled most of the country and were poised for a final drive on the capital.

On July 17 Somoza, his son Tachito and half-brother Jose (both Guard officers), and a few other ranking officials boarded a plane for Miami. The caretaker government they left in place survived for two days before its leaders followed the Somozas into exile on July 19, the official date of the revolutionary victory.

The demise of the FAO and the circumstances surrounding Somoza's departure further undermined the political authority of Nicaraguan moderates and of the United States. Neither had been able to move Somoza. Their loss was the FSLN's gain. Sandinista strategy, determination and courage had achieved what demonstrations, prayers and diplomatic pressures could not. An organization whose membership numbered fewer than 20 militants in 1961 had become the core of a mass movement without precedent in Nicaraguan history.[24]

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[24]Booth, p. 147.

Its military forces were soon to become the national army and its leaders the nation's top officials.

FSLN Ideology

The ideology of the Frente Sandinista has its roots in two sources: the life and thought of Sandino, and Marxism-Leninism. Sandino's patriotism, his identification with the masses, his ingenious guerrilla tactics, his triumph over an elaborately equipped foreign army and his martyrdom at the hands of the first Somoza made him the subject of a powerful national myth. It is Sandino's image and his myth, less so his ideas, which are important to the FSLN.[25] Years of repression under various Somozas nourished the myth so that for Nicaraguans of diverse ideological inclinations, "Sandino and the dynasty became historic poles of political good and evil, national pride and shame."[26] Only the Marxist left, misled by its own orthodoxy, seemed indifferent to him. Fonseca was an exception among Marxists and he spent hours convincing his fellow

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[25]A detailed and intriguing discussion of the ideas of Sandino is found in Hodges, pp. 1-160 especially. On the life of Sandino see Gregorio Selser, Sandino, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981) and Karl Bermann, ed. Sandino Without Frontiers, (Hampton, Virginia: Compita Publishing, 1988) which includes Sergio Ramirez's essay "The Lad From Niquinohomo," pp. 13-46.

[26]Gilbert, p. 20.

revolutionaries that their "National Liberation Front" should be "Sandinista."[27]

Fonseca and other FSLN writers portray Sandino as a revolutionary and staunch anti-imperialist with social ideas verging on Marxism. But the conception of Sandino as a proto-Marxist is forced and largely based on selective quotation. Sandino was unreceptive to Communists like the Salvadoran Agustin Farabundo Marti, who, in Sandino's words,

> have tried to twist this movement of national defense, converting it into an essentially social struggle. I have opposed this with all my might. This movement is national and anti-imperialist.[28]

Moreover, while Sandino observed that "Only the workers and peasants will go to the end, only their organized force will attain victory"[29] it is often forgotten by contemporary Sandinistas that the victory he sought was over the North Americans, not over the bourgeoisie. The victory sought was one of national independence, not of socialism.[30]

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[27]Black, p. 76, and Bernard Diederich, Somoza and the Legacy of US Involvement in Central America, (New York: Dutton, 1981), p. 68.

[28]Quoted in Gilbert, p. 21.

[29]Augusto Cesar Sandino, "Manifesto, February 26, 1930," in Bermann, p. 77.

[30]This point is abundantly clear when one reads the selected writings compiled by Bermann, pp. 48-105. See especially "Political Manifesto, 1 July 1927," pp. 48-51.

There is no doubt about Sandino's anti-imperialism. He was profoundly offended by U.S. manipulation of his country's affairs, disgusted with Nicaraguans like Somoza who staked their careers on U.S. power, and preached Latin American solidarity in the face of Yankee domination of the hemisphere.[31] "[T]he sovereignty of a people is not to be debated but to be defended with arms in hand," he argued.[32]

In defending the sovereignty of the Nicaraguan people Sandino consistently opted for the poor against the privileged. "His views reflected his own early experience of poverty and his conviction that the self-serving rich (*vendepatrias*, `country-sellers,' he called them) were responsible for American domination of his country."[33] Sandino condemned both the foreign company that abused its workers and the moneylender who coveted an indebted family's land. His army seized the possessions of rich landowners who cooperated with the enemy and distributed them to the poor. Sandino favored a national program of agrarian cooperatives for landless peasants. But he did not see the need to expropriate existing landholdings in land-rich Nicaragua for this purpose. Moreover, Sandino had no systematic objection

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[31]See Bermann, pp. 48-105.

[32]Quoted in Gilbert, p. 21.

[33]Gilbert, p. 21.

to capitalism: "Capital can play its part and grow; but the worker should not be humiliated or exploited."[34]

Sandino's anti-imperialism, his insistence on defending his cause with "arms in hand," and his populism are consistent with the thinking of the Sandinistas. The frequent invocation of Sandino has allowed the FSLN to connect themselves with a tradition of popular rebellion and anti-imperialism and has also allowed the movement to associate itself with a charismatic figure without risking personalistic leadership. What is missing in Sandino however, is a systematic understanding of class conflict and the role of the revolutionary party. For this the Sandinista leadership turned to Marxism.

The leaders of the FSLN were Marxists before they became Sandinistas and therefore they read Sandino through Marx. Victor Tirado, one of the few survivors of the movement's early years, later explained the relationship between Marx and Sandino in the evolution of Sandinista thought.

> Marxism for the Sandinistas was a complete revelation--the discovery of a new world. And the first thing we learned from it was to know ourselves, to look inside our country into our people's heritage--toward Sandino. Through Marxism, we came to know Sandino, our history, and our roots. This is, among other things,

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[34]Quoted in Ibid., p. 22.

> the teaching we received from Marx--reading him, as Fonseca said, with Nicaraguan eyes.[35]

The FSLN has not treated Marxism as a fixed canon but as a body of insights that they can adapt to their own needs and Nicaraguan conditions. Sandinista ideology starts from the Marxist premise that class conflict is inevitable in most societies and a source of progress in human history. A pamphlet written by Fonseca in 1968 and directed at students the FSLN declared,

> historical experience . . . teaches that there can be no peace between millionaires and workers . . . that there can be no situations other than the following: either the rich exploit the poor or the poor free themselves, eliminating the privileges of the millionaires.[36]

Similarly, the FSLN's "General Political-Military Platform (May 1977)", an internal document issued by the dominant Tercista leadership, declares that the working class, synthesized and guided by the Sandinista vanguard, the FSLN, "will be the leaders of the revolution." The same document asserts that "The dialectical development of human society entails the

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[35]Victor Tirado Lopez, "Karl Marx: The International Workers' Movement's Greatest Fighter and Thinker," in Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution, ed. Bruce Marcus (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1985), p. 105.

[36]Carlos Fonseca, Obras, Volume I, (Managua: Nueva Nicaragua, 1982), p. 69.

progress from capitalism to socialism."[37] These statements suggest faith in Marx's Marxism. However Sandinista thinkers from Carlos Fonseca to the current leadership have understood that classical Marxism does not fit Nicaraguan conditions very well.

According to the Sandinistas, Nicaragua in the 1970s was a nation whose economic and political growth was distorted by imperialism. Imperialism distorted the development of the economy through its emphasis on the production of primary exports consumed by developed capitalist economies. "Our function," observed Sandinista agricultural minister Jaime Wheelock, "was to grow sugar, cocoa and coffee for the United States; we served dessert at the imperialist dinner table."[38] Similarly, U.S. intervention into the political realm has created a bourgeois state which serves the interests of imperialism.[39]

The Sandinistas concluded that the dependent character of the Nicaraguan economy and the imperialist

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[37]"General Political-Military Platform of the FSLN for the Triumph of the Popular Sandinista Revolution (May 1977)" in Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional Perspective, eds. Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Duran (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), pp. 301-304.

[38]Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua: The Beleaguered Revolution," New York Times Magazine, 28 August 1983, p. 17.

[39]Carlos Fonseca Amador, "Nicaragua: Zero Hour," in Sandinistas Speak, ed. Bruce Marcus (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982), pp. 13-22.

control of the state had stymied the historical development of Nicaraguan society. The national bourgeoisie had accepted its own subordination within a system of imperialist domination, thereby losing the opportunity to play a progressive role in Nicaraguan history.[40] Sandinista theorists dated the bourgeoisie's surrender of its historic responsibilities precisely from the day in 1927 that the Liberal oligarchy abandoned the fight against the American-backed Conservative regime, leaving Sandino to confront the American intervention on his own. The Sandinista revolution would not be a bourgeois revolution since " . . . our country's bourgeoisie--which liquidated and castrated itself as a progressive political force by clearly surrendering to the interests of Yankee imperialism and by cooperating with the most reactionary Nicaraguan forces on May 4, 1927--is not and will never be a vanguard in the struggle against tyranny and in the democratic-revolutionary process."[41]

If the bourgeoisie was unequal to its historic role, so was the proletariat. Nicaragua's dependent capitalism did not create a substantial working class.

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[40]See especially Chapter III of the "General Political-Military Platform of the FSLN," "Various Fundamental Tenets of the Popular Sandinista Revolution," in Valenta and Duran, pp. 302-311.

[41]"General Political-Military Platform of the FSLN," in Valenta and Duran, p. 303.

Most of the salaried labor force in export agriculture worked seasonally and depended on subsistence agriculture or marginal urban employment between harvests; there was little opportunity to develop a sense of class identity.

Despite these difficulties the Sandinistas managed to cling to their revolutionary optimism and to adapt the theory of progressive classes to their needs. Sandinista theory overcame the inadequacies of the proletariat by stretching the definition of the class base of the revolution and by emphasizing the vanguard role of the party. The FSLN came to conceive of itself as a leader of a "worker-peasant alliance," a notion championed by the Tercerista tendency. The FSLN's 1977 "General Political-Military Platform" proposes a coalition "composed of the worker-peasant class allied to the petit bourgeoisie (especially students and intellectuals)" as "the motor forces of the Sandinista Revolution."[42]

The 1977 "Platform" also proposes

> the creation of an ample Anti-Somocista Front that will cluster in one way or another, all the anti-Somocista sectors, parties and mass organizations throughout the country, including the opposition bourgeoisie.[43]

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[42]"General Political-Military Platform of the FSLN," in Valenta and Duran, p. 303.

[43]Ibid., p. 315.

This enlargement of the movement, which proved a key element in Sandinista strategy, did not signal a demise in the influence of the FSLN in the revolutionary struggle as the bourgeoisie was regarded as a partner in a coalition in which the Frente would be "hegemonic."[44] Indeed, the "Platform" posits that the "Broad Anti-Somocista Front . . . [is a] tactical and temporary alliance."[45] In an interview conducted a year later, Daniel Ortega refers to the platform and employs virtually the same language. The broad anti-Somocista front is "tactical and temporary," and despite the alliance with bourgeois progressives, the FSLN's program is tied to the "proletarian, peasant, and middle classes."[46]

Sandinista theorists posit that the same distorted pattern of national development that required broadening the social base of the revolution has also required that

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[44]The Platform states that "political hegemony in the Front will be obtained and maintained by the FSLN. . . . The opposing bourgeoisie thereby will not be allowed the political leadership of the Anti-Somocista Front: the struggle will be planned and conducted according to the guidelines set forth by the FSLN . . ." (Ibid.).

[45]Ibid.

[46]"Interview with Daniel Ortega," Latin American Perspectives 6 (Winter 1979): 117-118. For a discussion of the role of the bourgeoisie and the middle sectors in revolutionary Nicaragua see Orlando Nunez Soto, "The Third Social Force in National Liberation Movements," Latin American Perspectives 8 (Spring 1981): 5-21.

a historically conscious elite acting in the interests of the oppressed classes, a vanguard party, lead the revolution. The vanguard concept is Lenin's most important contribution to the ideology of the FSLN. According to FSLN leader Dora Maria Tellez, in 1979 the Sandinista movement was comprised of

> a few men and women who . . . contain within themselves the dignity of all the people. They are examples to all of us. And then, through struggle, the people as a whole reclaim the strength and dignity shown by a few.[47]

The FSLN, as vanguard party, sees itself as acting on behalf of an ideologically backward working class or as a substitute or stand-in for the proletariat. In 1979 the FSLN National Directorate declared that

> [the] FSLN exercises the control of power in the name of the workers and the other oppressed sectors, or, what would in effect be the same, . . . the workers control power through the FSLN.[48]

The FSLN vanguard sees itself as the leader of a two-stage revolution in which national liberation is followed by social liberation. According to the 1977 "Platform,"

> To break the chains that bind our country to the yoke of foreign imperialism is the determining factor in our struggle for national liberation. Breaking the yoke of

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[47]Margaret Randall, Sandino's Daughters: Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle, (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981), p. 53.

[48]Quoted in Gilbert, p. 32.

> exploitation and oppression imposed by the dominant reactionary forces over our masses determines our process of social liberation. Both historical enterprises will advance together, indissolubly, if there exists a Marxist-Leninist cause and a solid vanguard to direct the process. . . . Our struggle should never be left midway, even if conciliatory, bourgeois forces should strive for such a goal. The popular-democratic phase should be, for the Sandinista cause, a means used for consolidating its revolutionary position and organizing the masses, so that the process moves unequivocally toward socialism.[49]

The first phase would focus on defeating Somoza and freeing Nicaragua from the clutches of imperialism while laying the groundwork for the social revolution phase. This was to be accomplished through the Broad Anti-Somoza front, and, after July 1979, a new government in which the FSLN would be "hegemonic." The key objective of the new government, the FSLN National Directorate agreed in March 1979, would be the "neutralization" of potential internal and external enemies, while accumulating the military and mass forces that "guarantee the continuity of our [revolutionary] process."[50]

The second phase of the revolution has as its goal the creation of socialism. "[O]ur great objective,"

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[49]"General Political-Military Platform of the FSLN," in Valenta and Duran, pp. 301-302.

[50]FSLN-DN, "*Documentos de Unificación*," p. 108, quoted in Gilbert, p. 37. See also Henri Weber, Nicaragua: The Sandinista Revolution, (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 61-85.

wrote Fonseca in 1969, "is socialism."[51] Sandinista documents and pronouncements have reiterated Fonseca's assertion that socialism is the final aim of the revolution. Yet, despite the FSLN's commitment to socialism there is no consensus within the organization, beyond the view that their actions would be dedicated to pursuing "the logic of the majority," the interests of society's poor and marginalized, as to what socialism would entail.

A key party document published in 1980 asserts that:

> The objectives of the Revolution are none other than to fight until it guarantees the well being of all workers. Instead of the shack, decent and humane housing. Replace the floor with a bed to which the producer of social wealth has a right.[52]

Others see Nicaraguan socialism grounded in the creation of a "new man," who has overcome the self-serving values promoted by capitalism. In 1979 Carlos Tunnermann, then Minister of Education, observed:

> The new Nicaragua also needs a new man who has stripped himself of egotism, who places social interests before individual interests. A new man who knows that the contribution that each individual can make to the community is very important and that the individual is most

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[51]Quoted in Gilbert, p. 38.

[52]FSLN-*Secretaria Nacional de Propaganda y Educación Política, "El Sandinismo no es Democratismo,"* quoted in Ibid.

> fulfilled when he works within a collectivity.[53]

Yet Humberto Ortega appears to reject completely the notion of a "new man." His vision of the future focuses more on everyday essentials.

> [We want to] escape underdevelopment and create wealth so that the people will be happy and not just further socialize our poverty. We want to see the day when all our people can eat ham and they can have television sets and take vacations.[54]

The second stage of the revolution would also be one characterized by a direct, participatory form of democracy, in which the interests of the majority would be ensured. As is made clear in the 1977 "Platform," the realization of Sandinista democracy will require the interim leadership of a conscious vanguard which will create national institutions capable of defending the interests of the majority. Moreover, Sandinista democracy will emphasize democratic results over democratic process and popular participation over electoral institutions. Indeed, Sandinista theorists argued that electoral democracy, which historically has not served the interests of the majority, especially in the developing nations, would have to await the

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[53]Carlos Tunnerman, Hacía Una Nueva Educación en Nicaragua, (Managua: *Distribudora Cultural*, 1983), p. 19, quoted in Ibid.

[54]Quoted in Gilbert, p. 39.

establishment of the national institutions capable of defending the revolution.[55]

The FSLN in Power

When the Sandinistas triumphally entered Managua on July 19 they alone enjoyed immense authority and prestige. The Somocistas were in flight, the liberal bourgeoisie was in significant disarray and the FSLN enjoyed the support which could allow them to destroy their real enemies and false allies alike. Yet the Sandinistas proved to be generous in victory. The death penalty was abolished. The 7,500 captured Guardsmen had the right to a normal trial and faced a maximum of thirty years imprisonment. The property and political rights of the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie were preserved, and in 1980 the private sector controlled 80 percent of agricultural production, 75 percent of industrial production and 45 percent of the service sector.[56] Moreover, COSEP representatives and their allies even had a majority on the new Council of State until April

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[55]Jose Luis Coraggio, Nicaragua: Revolution and Democracy, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), pp. 11-56.

[56]Henri Weber, "Nicaragua: The Sandinist Revolution," in Crisis in the Caribbean, eds. Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), pp. 105-106.

1980 when the FSLN expanded its size from thirty-three to forty-seven.[57]

The "generosity" of this early period of Sandinista rule aroused some fears that the FSLN was too close to the bourgeoisie and would mortgage "the revolutionary future in order to cope with the immediate needs of business and of the local treasury."[58] There were however, good reasons for the FSLN steering clear of a "maximum program" which would entail wholesale nationalizations, renunciation of the huge foreign debt contracted by the Somozas and assumption of all power. First, FSLN commandantes realized that if the nation was to rise from the ruin caused by years of Somoza neglect and revolution they would need the technical, managerial and administrative skills of the bourgeoisie, as well as the confidence bourgeois participation would inspire in

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[57]Sandinista Nicaragua's first constitution, the Fundamental Statute of 22 August 1979, created the Council of State which shared legislative functions with the Governing Junta of National Reconstruction (JGRN). The Council was originally slated to have thirty-three representatives, with twelve from the FSLN and its closest political allies, but the FSLN Directorate and the JGRN later added fourteen new delegates, twelve from pro-FSLN groups. This decision precipitated the first serious political crisis of the new regime as Alfonso Robelo, leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Party, immediately resigned from the government, followed a few days later by Violetta Chamorro, widow of the anti-Somoza leader murdered in 1978. David Close, Nicaragua: Politics, Economics and Society, (London: Pinter, 1988), p. 122.

[58]James Petras, "Whither the Nicaraguan Revolution?" Monthly Review 31 (October 1979): 15.

Western financiers. Hence the Sandinistas sought to reactivate the private sector through the provision of credits, enforcing labor discipline and moderating wage increases, and by ensuring respect for their property and their participation in high office.[59]

Second, engaging in alliance politics with the liberal bourgeoisie also allowed the FSLN a breathing space to consolidate its position before moving on to the socialist phase of the revolution. During this period the FSLN sought to extend the benefits of the revolution to all areas of the nation and to spread the growth of Sandinista popular movements. Third, a period of alliance politics was seen as necessary given the ideological underdevelopment of the Nicaraguan masses. Since the vast majority of Nicaraguans did not have the ideological understanding of the vanguard, and since the bourgeoisie did play an active role in the struggle against the dictatorship, most Nicaraguans did not see the irreconcilable conflict of interests between the bourgeoisie and the people that the vanguard did. Therefore,

> one key function of the FSLN alliance policy was precisely to enable the working masses to grasp this conflict through their own experience of the bourgeoisie's attitude on the transitional phase; and to make this

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[59]Close, pp. 73-106.

possible without endangering the process of transition itself.[60]

The FSLN strategy of alliance involved real concessions to the bourgeoisie, however as with the alliance politics which led to the overthrow of Somoza, the Sandinistas were determined to maintain their hegemony within the new society.[61] The FSLN leadership had no illusion about the deep-seated conflict between their own socialist perspective and the goals of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. Moreover, the leadership understood that the two were bearers of radically different social projects which they would eventually seek to impose on one another. In order for the FSLN project to win out, the Frente set out to spread and reinforce the structures of hegemony. During the period of alliance with the bourgeoisie guerrilla fighters were organized into a Sandinista army and police force; the FSLN secured a majority on the Council of State, and the Sandinistas built a system of mass organizations. The national literacy crusade--which sent 100,000 volunteer students and schoolchildren to the countryside in an

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[60]Weber, "Nicaragua: The Sandinist Revolution," p. 108.

[61]FSLN comandante Jaime Wheelock summarized this position by saying: "Let the bourgeoisie just produce and limit itself, as a class, to a productive role. Let it use its means of production to live, not as an instrument of power [or] domination" (quoted in Close, p. 74).

effort to eradicate illiteracy--is another example of FSLN tactics in this period of alliance with the bourgeoisie. The volunteers' mission was to teach the campesinos how to read, write and count, to give lessons in the history of Nicaragua, and to help the agricultural workers to organize unions and militias.

> For six months, these 100,000 young people shared the lives of "the wretched of the earth." Most of them, FSLN leaders believe, will be permanently marked by the experience, and will know how to approach political problems "starting from the class interests of rural proletarians." Conversely, the schoolchildren's arrival en masse to teach and serve them did more than any material benefit to convince the peasants that something fundamental had changed "at the top," that power belonged to them and no longer to the *senores*.[62]

The FSLN's hope that the bourgeoisie would be willing to help reconstruct Nicaragua while the Frente strengthened its political position and pursued its social project was soon proved untenable. Class polarization set in almost immediately after the July 19 triumph. Many members of the privileged classes were certain that totalitarian communism was just around the corner. Accordingly, some fled immediately to Miami whereas others first illegally decapitalized their industries, transferred money abroad, and then fled. The process of class polarization was exacerbated by the

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[62]Henri Weber, "Nicaragua: The Sandinist Revolution," p. 112.

resignations of Alfonso Robelo and Violetta Chamorro from the Council of State in early 1980, the takeover of La Prensa--the nation's largest independent daily--by a conservative wing of the Chamorro family, and by the election of Ronald Reagan in the fall 1980. The election of Reagan, who had campaigned on a platform that "deplor[ed] the Marxist-Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua" and promised to end all aid to that country, accelerated the class polarization as many in the privileged classes "then apparently saw even less need than before to accommodate themselves to the new revolutionary system."[63] From then on, tension mounted rapidly as the conservative Catholic church hierarchy, the opposition political parties, COSEP and La Prensa--"all working in obvious coordination with the U.S. embassy"--showed less and less inclination to engage in constructive dialogue.[64]

As the Contra war began in ernest in 1982, increased emphasis was placed on military preparedness and certain human rights were gradually infringed upon in the name of national security.[65] Moreover, on six

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[63]Thomas W. Walker, "Introduction," in Reagan Versus the Sandinistas, ed. Thomas W. Walker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. 6.

[64]Ibid., p. 7.

[65]In December 1981 President Reagan signed a directive authorizing the CIA to spend $19.8 million to create an exile paramilitary force in Honduras to harass

occasions, La Prensa was closed for two-day periods in accordance with a law decreed by the original Junta (of which La Prensa owner Violetta Chamorro was a member) which calls for such an action when an organ of the media is found to be disseminating material that is false and destabilizing. La Prensa would function under censorship until April 1986 when editor Jaime Chamorro published an op-ed piece in the Washington Post calling for Congress to vote $100 million worth of aid to the Contras. Once the U.S. Congress passed the measure La Prensa was closed. The paper's owners rejected calls from President Ortega to reopen, subject to the emergency law, and an offer from Xavier Chamorro, owner of the pro-government El Nuevo Diario, to buy them out.[66]

Accompanying the military and paramilitary efforts to oust the Sandinistas was an escalating program of economic strangulation. The Reagan administration blocked approval of Nicaraguan loan requests before the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank. U.S. trade was initially drastically curtailed--the Nicaraguan quota for exporting sugar to the U.S. was cut by 90 percent in May 1983--and then, in May 1988,

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Nicaragua. See "U.S. Said to Plan 2 CIA Actions in Latin Region," New York Times, 14 March 1982, p. 2.

[66]Close, p. 131.

embargoed completely. The Reagan administration also made an effort to pressure its allies to follow suit.[67]

These activities, coupled with a sharp decline in world prices of Nicaragua's export commodities and the enormous direct and indirect cost of the Contra war meant that by 1983 Nicaragua was having increasing problems in servicing its debt. In 1983 Venezuela ceased supplying Nicaragua with oil. and in 1984 Mexico drastically curtailed supplies of oil. As a result, by 1984 and 1985 the Sandinistas were forced to turn to the USSR for most of its petroleum needs. The scarcity of foreign exchange also meant severe shortages of imported goods or of products manufactured in Nicaragua from imported material or with imported machinery. "Of course, such shortages also triggered rampant inflation and spiraling wage demands, which could not be satisfied given the tremendous diversion of government revenues into defense."[68]

Social services were also adversely affected. As increased emphasis was placed on defense, government spending on health, education, housing, food subsidies, and the like, had to be cut back. Further, the Contras were deliberately targeting the social service

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[67]Michael E. Conroy, "Economic Aggression as an Instrument of Low-Intensity Warfare," in Reagan Versus the Sandinistas, pp. 57-79.

[68]Walker, p. 9.

infrastructure and many government employees in health, education, and cooperatives were kidnapped, tortured and killed; schools, clinics, day care centers and grain storage facilities were destroyed.

Both the Contra war and the U.S.-led economic aggression against Nicaragua did not have the desired effect of engendering sufficient discontent to overthrow the Sandinista government. Conversely, as Walker points out, by 1984 popular support for the government--as measured by levels of membership in pro-Sandinista grassroots organizations--reached its highest levels. "By then, around half of all Nicaraguans aged sixteen or older were in such voluntary support organizations."[69] Moreover, in the November 1984 election for President and National Assembly the FSLN received 66.7 percent of the presidential vote and 62.9 percent of the Assembly vote.[70]

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[69]Ibid.

[70]Susanne Jonas and Nancy Stein, "The Construction of Democracy in Nicaragua," Latin American Perspectives 66 (Summer 1990): 7.

Ninety-three percent of eligible voters registered; although voting is not mandatory, 75.4 percent of registered voters voted; 70.8 percent of registered voters cast valid ballots.

In principle, no major tendency was excluded from the electoral process. A total of six opposition parties (ranging from rightist to Marxist-Leninist) participated in addition to the Sandinistas. All participants were guaranteed equal resources (campaign funding, supplies, and the like) and equal access to the mass media. A number of emergency restrictions were lifted so that no party was prevented from carrying out

While the Reagan administration was quick to denounce the Nicaraguan election as a "Soviet-style sham," the openness and fairness of the election was recognized by foreign observers not directly linked to the Reagan administration. Americas Watch called it "a model of probity and fairness" and reports in the European press were almost uniformly favorable, as was the report by a delegation from the European Parliament.[71] Even U.S. observers outside of the U.S. government, such as the Latin American Studies delegation, as well as former diplomats and Congressmen, judged the election most favorably.[72]

In the wake of the 1984 election, the Reagan administration explicitly threatened Nicaragua, saying that the election constituted a "setback for peace talks" in the region and would "heighten tensions" with the United States and warned that it intended to pressure Nicaragua to hold a "real election" as a

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an active campaign or from holding rallies.

[71]Americas Watch, Human Rights in Nicaragua: Reagan, Rhetoric and Reality, (New York: Americas Watch, 1985), quoted in Ibid. Piero Gleijeses, "The Reagan Doctrine and Central America," Current History 85 (December 1986): 401-404.

[72]Latin American Studies Association, "Report of the LASA Delegation to Observe the Nicaraguan General Election of 4 November 1984," LASA Forum, Winter 1985. Wayne Smith, "Lies About Nicaragua," Foreign Policy 70 (Spring 1987): 166-182.

condition for peace talks.[73] While continued U.S. hostility was ostensibly aimed at pressuring the FSLN to reform and democratize their nation, the true objective was to overthrow the Sandinista government, or, falling short of that, to "raise the cost" of having made a revolution by causing the maximum amount of destruction.[74] As a Pentagon official told the Los Angeles Times,

> 2,000 hard-core guys could keep the pressure on the Nicaraguan government, force them to use their economic resources for the military, and prevent them from solving their economic problems.[75]

Similarly, according to former Contra chief Enrique Bermudez in 1986, the aim of Contra attacks inside Nicaragua was not to foster democratic reforms but to "heighten repression."[76]

By the end of the 1980s, the U.S. policies of organizing and financing a counter-revolutionary war, coupled with the economic embargo, including a blockade of lending from the major Western multilateral agencies, proved effective instruments of economic aggression.

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[73]New York Times, 5 November 1984, p. 2.

[74]An interesting discussion of the internal debate over Reagan's policy toward the Sandinista government is found in Kenneth Roberts, "The United States, Nicaragua, and Conflict Resolution in Central America," International Security 15 (Fall 1990): 67-102.

[75]Quoted in The Nation, 1 May 1989, p. 1.

[76]Quoted in Jonas and Stein, p. 24.

Nicaragua's economy was in shambles: gross domestic product per capita had fallen significantly in almost each year of Sandinista rule, reaching in 1989 levels below those Nicaragua knew in 1960; inflation had risen almost every year since 1979 and had reached 33,000 percent for 1988; reported urban real-wage levels fell to less than 10 percent of what they were at the start of the Sandinista revolution; and international indebtedness had grown to more than seven times the level inherited by the Sandinista government.[77] Moreover, severe austerity measures implemented in February 1988, adjusted in June 1988 and redoubled in February 1989 led to a gradual elimination of virtually all of the social programs that were the hallmark of the revolution in its first years.[78] It was hoped that the austerity measures, which were modeled on the "heterodox shock" treatments that Brazil and Argentina pioneered in 1985 and 1986 as a means to halt rampant inflation, would persuade the bourgeoisie to reactivate production, accelerate the disarming and demobilization of the Contras who had agreed to a cease fire in March 1988, and better the Sandinista image outside of the country

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[77]Michael E. Conroy, "The Political Economy of the 1990 Nicaraguan Elections," International Journal of Political Economy 20 (Fall 1990): 5-33.

[78]Ibid.

which would in turn, engender increased economic assistance, especially from Western Europe.[79]

Sandinista leaders hoped that the elections of February 1990 would be a "final resolution" of the debate over the legitimacy of the FSLN government led by Daniel Ortega, raising hopes for an end to the Contra war, peacetime reconciliation, and economic reconstruction. However, if as Walker argues, the Sandinistas won in 1984 because the majority of the electorate was enjoying an improved standard of living and because the nation was clearly under attack from a hostile force, in 1990 the standard of living for the majority had plummeted and the nation was tired of war. The economic problems detailed above were exacerbated by FSLN adjustment policies which reduced public spending, shrunk public employment by 50,000 persons, attempted to reprivatize some state companies, and eliminated or reduced government subsidies on food and public transportation. In general, it was

> wage laborers, peasant farmers, and small producers [who] had to assume the social cost of the policies of adjustment; that is, it was assumed by those who in the terminology of the early years were called the driving forces of the revolution.[80]

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[79]Carlos M. Vilas, "The Contribution of Economic Policy and International Negotiation to the Fall of the Sandinista Government," New Political Science, no. 18, (Fall/Winter 1990), pp. 81-102.

[80]Ibid., p. 88.

Similarly, with the signing of a cease-fire with the Contras in March 1988 at the border village of Sapoa, public opinion began to associate economic problems more closely with the government's strategies and less closely with the war.[81] Furthermore, by early 1990 most Nicaraguans would concur with Esmerelda Pareda, interviewed by the Boston Globe in a small town southwest of Managua as she waited to vote: "I have lost a son and a brother to the war. I have suffered enough. I am here to vote for peace."[82] Clearly, many Nicaraguans voted for peace; many voted against the party which had been unable to end the Contra war and for the UNO coalition which, because of its explicit backing by the United States, gave the most credible assurance of peace.

The USSR, Perestroika and Nicaragua's FSLN

The victory of the FSLN came as a surprise to the Soviet Union. Abraham Lowenthal, who visited the Soviet Union in 1981, reports that Latinskaia Amerika editor, Sergo Mikoyan, told him that "few could see the

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[81]John W. Soule, "The Economic Austerity Packages of 1988 and Their Impact on Public Opinion," New Political Science, no. 18, (Fall/Winter 1990), pp. 103-129.

[82]Quoted in Alexander Cockburn, "Victory for Violence," New Statesman and Society, 9 March 1990, p. 20.

possibility of a Sandinista triumph even in 1979"[83] The Soviet Union played no active role in the guerrilla war against the Somoza dictatorship and gave no direct aid to the FSLN. Nicaragua's Moscow-oriented Communist party, the PSN, was hostile to armed struggle and tried to back U.S. efforts to find a replacement for Somoza until 1979 when the FSLN was unified. Its role in the last few months of the war was confined to propaganda support.[84]

The Soviet Union took care to contain its enthusiasm even after the triumph of the revolution. An article in the 19 July 1979 edition of Pravda which reported the departure of Somoza from Nicaragua was very low key, there was no acclamation of FSLN success and the emphasis was heavily on the probability of U.S. intervention.[85] However, as the Sandinistas began to consolidate power, Soviet commentaries became more positive. In October 1980 leading Soviet ideologist Boris Ponomarev described the Nicaraguan revolution as a "major success," and in his speech to the CPSU Congress of February 1981, Brezhnev stated that the revolutions in Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Nicaragua were the most

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[83]Quoted in Nicola Miller, Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1959-1987, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 195.

[84]Black, p. 145.

[85]Miller, p. 196.

important "new victories" since 1976.[86] Similarly, Soviet academic specialists noted that the FSLN had steered clear of the mistakes made by Allende in Chile and that the Sandinista model, with its proposed incorporation of the private sector, is feasible and could potentially be applied elsewhere in the Third World.[87]

Despite the enthusiasm among academic specialists, at the official level Moscow was unwilling to grant Nicaragua the official "socialist" status that would command a major Soviet commitment to the Nicaraguan revolution.[88] Indeed, even before the enunciation of *perestroika* and foreign policy "new thinking," all Soviet interactions with Nicaragua illustrate a desire to aid the Nicaraguan revolution, thus making life more difficult for the United States in its own "backyard," without turning Nicaragua into "another Cuba." By

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[86]Ibid.

[87]Sergo Mikoyan, "*Las Particulardades de la Revolución en Nicaragua y sus Tareas desde el punto de Vista de la Teoría y la Práctica del Movimiento Librador*," América Latina (Moscow), no. 3 (1980): 101-115.

[88]Sandinista statements of adherence to Marxism-Leninism notwithstanding, the USSR classified the FSLN a "vanguard party" capable of leading a developing nation toward socialism. Such parties are seen as substantially inferior to Communist parties in the level of the theoretical maturity of their cadres, in the degree of their revolutionary influence on the working people, and in their ideological, political and organizational experience. Miller, p. 197.

denying the Sandinista government official "socialist" status the Soviets were able to show their solidarity with revolutionary forces in Central America, while avoiding the drain on its resources which identifying itself too closely with the revolution would entail. In addition to avoiding the drain on material resources which Cuba has been for over 30 years, this stance also allowed the Soviet Union to assert that its intentions in Central America are not offensive.

On October 18, 1979, when diplomatic relations were restored between Nicaragua and the USSR, the Soviet representative to the ceremony in Nicaragua, Yurii Volskii, Soviet Ambassador to Mexico, was careful to stress that "Soviet-Nicaraguan relations are not directed against any third country and will not affect anyone else."[89] Similarly, when asked in August 1982 how the Soviet Union would respond to direct aggression against Nicaragua, Yurii Fonkin, Secretary-General of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, replied, "We will support Nicaragua politically in every way."[90] In private, one Soviet official admitted that, "If the Americans invaded

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[89]Ibid., p. 198.

[90]Morris Rothenberg, "Latin America in Soviet Eyes," Problems of Communism 32 (September/October 1983): 11.

Nicaragua, what would we do? What could we do? Nothing."[91]

While the Nicaraguan revolution is a geopolitical problem for the U.S. and therefore is worth defending, albeit in a limited way, there are few positive incentives for the Soviet Union to give their full support to the FSLN. The Nicaraguan revolution holds out the prospect for only limited strategic and political gains for the USSR. First, even if the FSLN had shown a willingness to provide the Soviet Union with bases, it is difficult to see what strategic advantage the Soviet Union would enjoy in Nicaragua which it does not already possess in Cuba. This has been implicitly recognized by U.S. officials assessing their own security needs in the Caribbean. One U.S. diplomat put it thus:

> In the event of a war in Europe where we'd have to reinforce NATO, we'd already have to watch Cuba to guard the shipping lanes from the gulf ports. It's more trouble if we have to watch Nicaragua too. That's it. . . . Compared to Cuba, Nicaragua could never amount to anything.[92]

Second, contrary to Sergo Mikoyan's more optimistic analysis, Soviet officials concluded that Nicaragua's

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[91]Jonathan Steele, World Power: Soviet Foreign Policy Under Brezhnev and Andropov, (London: Michael Joseph, 1983), p. 220.

[92]Allan Nairn, "Endgame: A Special Report on US Military Strategy in Central America," NACLA Report on the Americas 18 (May/June 1984): 27.

revolutionary power of example as a model of development is almost exclusively confined to its economically insignificant Central American neighbors.[93]

The relatively more important position of Cuba led the Soviet Union to adopt a "hands off Cuba" rather than a "hands off Nicaragua" policy in the early 1980s. In an International Affairs article of January 1982 there is an explicit condemnation of Washington's attempt to "subvert socialist Cuba, as well as other progressive Latin American states, such as Nicaragua and Grenada," but the declaration of Soviet support refers only to Cuba:

> The Soviet Union has supported and will continue to support the Cuban people in their struggle to protect their sovereignty. All progressive and peace-loving forces are coming out in defence of Cuba and its independence.[94]

Even in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Grenada, Soviet support for the FSLN was still expressed in terms of "unswerving solidarity" with the Nicaraguan people.[95]

Soviet military support to the Sandinista government has followed this pattern of limited support. Since 1981, when Contra forces began attacks against the

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[93]Miller, p. 198.

[94]K. Khachaturov, "Washington's Latin America Policy," International Affairs (Moscow) 1 (January 1982): 61.

[95]New York Times, 16 October 1983, p. A17.

FSLN, the USSR has been willing to supply the Sandinistas with sufficient military equipment to keep the Contras at bay but not enough for the Sandinistas to become a potent offensive force in the region. Throughout the 1980s the USSR confined its supplies to defensive weapons and, moreover, allowed the U.S. to define what it will accept as defensive.[96] Moreover, Sandinista requests for quantitative and qualitative increases in Eastern bloc supplies can be shown to be in direct response to specific threats to the security of the revolution.

Arms shipments from the socialist countries were insignificant in 1979-1980. They were estimated by U.S. intelligence sources at $12-13 million worth, and included Soviet ZPU light anti-aircraft guns, SA-7 surface to air missiles, RPG anti-tank grenades and East German trucks.[97] At the end of November 1981 Defense Minister Humberto Ortega spent one week in Moscow seeking increased supplies in the face of the escalating Contra war. U.S. intelligence estimates put Soviet and

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[96]The controversy over shipments of Soviet MIG-21s to Nicaragua is illustrative. The Soviet Union has failed to supply these aircraft, even though five members of the Nicaraguan airforce were trained in the USSR to use them, largely because the United States has stated that their acquisition by the FSLN would justify a military response.

[97]Marc Edelman, "Lifelines: Nicaragua and the Socialist Countries," NACLA Report on the Americas 19 (May/June 1985): 49.

Eastern European military aid to Nicaragua in 1982 at $56 million, "including about 20 more T-54 tanks, 12 BTR-60 armored personnel carriers, 6 105mm howitzers and around 48 Z152 37mm anti-aircraft guns."[98] The worsening military situation in 1983-1984 prompted the Sandinistas to request increased support, and U.S. administration sources estimate Socialist military aid to Nicaragua in 1983 at double the 1982 figure, i.e. over $100 million.[99] The 1983 level was slightly increased in 1984 and 1985, when shipments were valued at $115 million.[100] Soviet aid to Nicaragua increased considerably in 1986 with over $600 million worth of material shipped, according to the Pentagon. An only slightly lower level of aid was maintained over 1987 and 1988, reflecting a growing Soviet hope that U.S. policy in Nicaragua could be defeated.[101]

The Soviet Union's reluctance to be identified too closely with the Nicaraguan revolution on a political and military level was echoed by the slowness with which economic relations were developed with the Sandinista government. Moreover, Soviet economic aid to the Sandinista government became significant only once other

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[98]Miller, p. 202.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid.

sources of assistance were no longer available to the FSLN. As with the provision of military aid, Soviet economic assistance has been limited and has sought to provide the revolutionary government with sufficient resources to survive but little more. Emergency aid donated by Moscow in the aftermath of the revolution was of negligible value and far overshadowed by contributions by Western sources.[102] No significant contacts were made between the Nicaraguan and Soviet governments until March 1980, following the suspension of U.S. aid on January 23, 1980 and the cancellation of a $15 million credit on March 2, 1980, when a delegation of Sandinista leaders travelled to Moscow. "They returned with a reciprocal most-favored-nation trading agreement, a protocol on the establishment of trade representations, an agreement on planning cooperation and various other accords providing for Soviet assistance in fishing, water power resources, mining and geological surveys, along with a consular convention and an agreement on air communications."[103]

As Nicaragua's economic conditions deteriorated, the Sandinistas stepped up the urgency of their search

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[102]The Soviet contribution apparently consisted of donations of 1.5 million pencils, 1.5 million exercise books, 1,000 transistor radios, 30,000 pairs of boots and ten cars. Ibid., p. 205.

[103]Ibid.

for Soviet support. However, the fact that Nicaragua's primary exports--sugar, coffee, cotton--are already supplied by Cuba or other developing nations with which Moscow wants to develop trade relations, limited the economic activity between the two. The move toward the USSR vindicated the position of those within the FSLN, like Minister of Planning Henry Ruiz, who argued that integration with the socialist bloc was the best defense against Washington, and as ties between Nicaragua and the USSR grew, the FSLN moved away from a mixed economy toward a more centralized model with emphasis on the public sector. Daniel Ortega visited Moscow in May 1982 and negotiated a $100 million Soviet credit for deliveries of industrial machinery and equipment.

A succession of visits by Nicaraguan leaders to Moscow in 1982-1983 yielded relatively little in the way of economic assistance, and between 1979 and 1985 Soviet aid to Nicaragua measured $300-400 million.[104] Soviet aid increased in 1985 to an estimated $247 million and in 1986 and 1987 to $250 million.[105]

With the rise to power of Gorbachev and the enunciation of *perestroika* and foreign policy "new thinking," the Soviet policy of limited support to the

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[104]Ibid., p. 208.

[105]Ibid., p. 209. By comparison, U.S. economic aid to El Salvador in 1987 was $502 million.

FSLN became more clear. On the economic front, assistance from the socialist countries has declined every year since 1985, a development which proved a crucial factor in Nicaragua's economic crises in 1987 and 1988.[106] Since 1987, when hard-currency shortages made the purchase of sufficient quantities of oil impossible, the Soviet Union has made it clear that it cannot be counted upon to supply Nicaragua with all of its oil needs.[107] The Soviets have also expressed distress over Sandinista mismanagement and inefficient use of Soviet aid, and have pressured Nicaraguan industry "to optimize the use of existing machinery, increasing their efficiency, instead of seeking an indefinite increase of available machinery."[108] These same concerns led to the creation of a limited number of Nicaraguan-Soviet joint ventures which will employ resources in a more efficient manner.[109]

Under Gorbachev, Soviet policy toward Nicaragua has been characterized by strong support for both the

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[106]Conroy, "The Political Economy . . .," pp. 13-14.

[107]Miller, pp. 214-215.

[108]"USSR Trade Developing in `Decisive Manner'," Interview with Aleksandr Chirjrov, Chief Soviet Commercial Representative. Barricada, 16 March 1988, p. 4.

[109]"Ruiz on USSR Trade, Aid," FBIS-Latin America, 21 January 1988, pp. 23-24. "Cooperation Agreements Signed," FBIS-Latin America, 21 January 1988, p. 23.

Contadora process and, when the Contadora process collapsed in January 1987, the Esquipulas II treaty signed in August 1987. The emphasis on resolving regional conflicts and improving Soviet-U.S. relations found in Gorbachev's foreign policy led the Soviets to back negotiations aimed at resolving the Contra war in Nicaragua. Further, in the spring of 1989, in an effort aimed at "contribut[ing] to a total and definitive solution to the Central American solution," the Soviet Union suspended delivery of heavy weaponry to Nicaragua.[110] This was followed in October by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's assertion that his government will ask the Soviet Union to suspend its shipments of light military equipment to Nicaragua "when the Contra movement completely ceases its armed actions in Nicaragua."[111]

Prior to the rise to power of President Gorbachev, limited support for Sandinista Nicaragua could be explained in light of "the lessons of Cuba." That is, while the FSLN victory was an irritant to the U.S.--not unlike Afghanistan for the USSR--and thus was worthy of

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[110]"USSR No Longer Sending Weapons to Nicaragua," FBIS-Latin America, 19 May 1989, p. 4.

[111]"Ortega on USSR Weapons Shipments, GDR Visit," FBIS-Latin America, 6 October 1989, pp. 7-8. "More on Ortega Statements," FBIS-Latin America, 6 October 1989, p. 8. "Arms Shipments to Halt," FBIS-Latin America, 6 October 1989, pp. 8-9.

Soviet support, the USSR was unwilling to identify itself fully with this new regime. Since 1985 however, the Soviet's less than total commitment to the Sandinistas was intended to signal Washington that Moscow would be prepared to negotiate a solution to the conflict in Nicaragua. Such an action would correspond with the logic of *perestroika* and foreign policy new thinking. It may also have been a means of applying pressure on the FSLN to be flexible on the negotiations which resulted in the signing of the Esquipulas II treaty and to be prompt and thorough in their compliance subsequently.[112] It is certain, however, that Soviet cognizance that the U.S.-Nicaragua conflict could seriously complicate their own bilateral relations with the U.S. has led the Soviets to stress the limits of their commitment to Nicaragua.

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[112]"Commentators Believe USSR Pressured Ortega," FBIS-Latin America, 14 December 1989, pp. 28-29.

CHAPTER 6

PERESTROIKA AND THE REVOLUTION IN EL SALVADOR

El Salvador's Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) has been considered one of the most ideologically rigid guerrilla movements in Central America. The ideological dogmatism which prevented the FMLN guerrillas from cooperating with certain businessmen and progressive sectors within the Army in order to end the country's control by a small oligarchic group recently has been lamented by one of the FMLN's leading military commanders and strategists. Joaquin Villalobos, long considered one of the more hard-core leftists within the FMLN, has written that the movement lost "a historic opportunity" to unite the country around its cause in the early 1980s, "and our penance has been these 10 years of war."[1] This ideological rigidity notwithstanding, FMLN strategic thought has shown an ability to adapt to changing realities and the Front has exhibited an increased flexibility in redefining its goals in accordance with new realities.

Beginning in January 1989 the FMLN launched a new phase in its revolutionary struggle, one which redefines FMLN goals in light of new realities. The FMLN

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[1]FBIS-Latin America, 10 October 1989, p. 28.

describes the "strategic counteroffensive" as a phase in the war which combines military actions with various proposals for a demilitarization of the nation and negotiated settlement of the conflict. Moreover, since 1989 the FMLN leadership has been eager to discuss its vision of a rebel-led El Salvador. "The FMLN is proposing an open, pluralistic project, one which is rooted in our domestic and geopolitical reality," writes commander Villalobos.

> What is fundamental is not its ideological definition, but whether or not it resolves El Salvador's problems. . . . In El Salvador, to carry out an agrarian reform, parallel with the development of a pluralist democracy which benefits the majority, is to make revolution.[2]

Indeed, Villalobos has recently argued that his group can no longer even be considered Marxist, and added that one-party rule in El Salvador would be "absurd." Instead, the FMLN now hopes to model El Salvador's future on such prominent capitalist countries as Germany, Japan and Costa Rica, which have no army and are closely tied to the United States economy.[3] Similarly, in a recent article in Foreign Policy, Villalobos stresses that the future El Salvador is one

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[2]Quoted in Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag, "FMLN New Thinking: Rethinking Peace," NACLA: Report on the Americas 23 (September 1989): 37.

[3]Mark A. Uhlig, "Top Salvador Rebel Alters His Goals," New York Times, 7 March 1991, p. 3.

in which the FMLN shares power with other democratic forces, in which private enterprise plays a significant role in economic affairs, in which democratic elections and political pluralism thrive, and, most important of all, which is not a threat to the vital interests of the United States.[4]

The fact that these alterations in FMLN strategy and goals have come at roughly the same time as the global "demise of communism" has led some to wonder if this is just another manifestation of the world-wide disintegration of the communist Left. Has the FMLN seen the handwriting on the wall and reformed its ways, as socialism has proven itself unworkable? The FMLN leadership says no.

> If our revolutionary effort coincides with *perestroika* in any respect, it is in the struggle against the kind of dogmatism and orthodox thinking that endeavors to transfer mechanically to our country classic models of revolution, party systems, or strategy. Indeed, the struggle against dogmatism with Latin American revolutionary thought predates *perestroika*.[5]

Despite these denials, *perestroika* and the changes it has engendered, has had an effect on FMLN thinking. The "new thinking" of the FMLN is a result of a confluence of important developments, or perceived

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[4]Joaquin Villalobos, "A Democratic Revolution for El Salvador," Foreign Policy 74 (Spring 1989): 103-122.

[5]Ibid., p. 113.

developments. Some of these are articulated in the pronouncements and writings of FMLN commanders, while others are left largely unspoken. In the former category one can point to FMLN assertions that the correlation of forces within El Salvador has changed and now favors the FMLN and its allies on the left. Hence, once the Salvadoran Right learns that the war is now a stalemate and that its program is untenable, negotiations leading to a peaceful resolution of the conflict can proceed.

In the latter category, it is clear that the FMLN has learned from the experience of the Sandinistas. The "lesson of Nicaragua" that has been learned by the FMLN is that new policies are required to bring change to the nation without engendering the wrath of the U.S. Similarly, another largely unspoken reason for FMLN "new thinking" is the increasing popular support for democracy and peace in El Salvador. This growing sentiment makes it impossible for the left to continue to advocate insurrection alone and expect large-scale popular support.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the composition of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and then turns to examine the development of the Front's strategic thought. It concludes with a discussion of the various forces which have led the FMLN

to alter its strategy and now advocate a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The Composition of the FMLN

The Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) is a broad coalition of left forces composed of five political-military organizations[6] each linked to specific mass organizations and armed forces. The FMLN has its roots in two main sources: radicalized religious activists, and the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS). Vatican II and the 1968 Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellin, Colombia had a powerful impact on the Salvadoran clergy.[7] Christian base communities

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[6] The terminology is that of Tommie Sue Montgomery, Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 119-157.

Formed in October 1980, the FMLN includes:
The Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS)
The Popular Liberation Forces (FPL)
The Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP)
The National Resistance (RN)
The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC)

[7]Vatican II elaborated Pope John XXIII's 1961 and 1963 encyclicals concerning the human right to a decent standard of living, education, and political participation. Vatican II set forth two key principles: first, that the Church was of this world, and second, that it was a community of equals. Pope Paul VI inaugurated the Medellin meeting, where the Latin American bishops adapted these principles to Latin reality, setting the stage for many clergy to move beyond purely religious concerns to political issues. Penny Lernoux posits that Medellin was "one of the major political events of the century: it shattered the centuries-old alliance of Church, military and rich elites" (Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People, [Garden City

were formed in many parishes and through the 1970s these were important sources for activists and leaders of the guerrilla-led mass "popular organizations."[8] Similarly, the political-military organizations that split off from the Salvadoran Communist Party are also comprised, to a considerable degree, of former seminarians, radicalized members of the Christian base communities, and young Christian Democratic Party dissidents.

In varying degrees, all of the political-military organizations which form the FMLN are products of a prolonged and turbulent struggle within the Salvadoran Communist Party. The PCS was founded by Augustin Farabundo Marti in 1930, and two years later organized a peasant revolt in the western departments--the first attempted revolution by a Latin American

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NY: Doubleday, 1980], pp. 31-43). Tommie Sue Montgomery explains that "while four of the six members of the Salvadoran hierarchy adhered to an institutional, sacramentalist view of the Church's proper role in society, the two remaining prelates, both in the archdiocese of San Salvador (and Archbishop Oscar Romero before his death) accepted and promoted the positions of Medellin from the beginning" (Montgomery, p. 100).

[8]Two of the best discussions of the links between Christian base communities and the Salvadoran "popular organizations" are Philip Berryman The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American Revolutions, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1984), pp. 91-162; and Philip Berryman, "El Salvador: From Evangelization to Insurrection," in Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 58-78.

Communist Party. In the repression which followed Farabundo Marti and most of the other PCS leaders were executed and the party was outlawed.

Ever since 1932 the PCS has formally adhered to the policy of armed struggle as, according to the party general secretary Shafik Jorge Handal, this is "the most probable means of attaining victory."[9] Yet this was hardly the case in practice. A guerrilla uprising was attempted in the wake of the Fidelista victory in Cuba. It was easily suppressed by the military however, and the party once more set itself firmly against the armed struggle.[10] Instead, the PCS employed an electoralist strategy which, initially, called for the party's legal front, the National Democratic Union (UDN), to participate in elections, and after September 1971 placed it firmly behind the candidates of the center-left National Opposition Union (UNO).[11] As late as 1980 Handal claimed that UNO "voiced the democratic aspirations and structural changes" required by the

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[9]Quoted in Mario Menendez Rodriguez, El Salvador: Una Auténtica Guerra Civil (San Jose, 1980), pp. 150-151.

[10]James Dunkerley, The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in El Salvador (London: Verso, 1982), pp. 87-89.

[11]The National Opposition Union was comprised of the PCS front organization the UDN, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR).

great majority of the people and forced "a polarization in the electoral confrontation," and that the popularity of UNO in the 1972 elections vindicated the electoralist strategy of the PCS.[12]

Rebellion against this strategy came in 1970 at the Fourth Congress of the PCS. While brewing for some time, it was finally sparked by the party's support for the "Soccer War" with Honduras.[13] In April 1970 then PCS general secretary Salvador Cayetan Carpio, noting that within the PCS there exists "a stubborn majority" that at all costs blocked the advance toward "the political-military strategy that the people need for moving towards new stages of struggle," resigned from the party, went underground with a small group of comrades, and began building the Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL). Carpio, a former seminarian, argued that while a political-military strategy was imperative, "the armed struggle would be the main thread running

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[12]Ibid., p. 87.

[13]According to Dunkerley, "Consistent with its belief that there existed an industrially-based national bourgeoisie which would challenge the power of the landed oligarchy, the party leadership surmised that this faction would head the campaign against Honduras on the basis of defending national independence. The oligarchy, on the other hand, which was distinguished by its close links with imperialism and secondary interest in inter-state feuds, would seek to avoid a conflict which would only disrupt the rhythm of production in the campo. The major flaw in this interpretation was, as argued by the opposition inside the PCS, the absence of any `national bourgeoisie' . . ." (Dunkerley, p. 88).

through the people's revolutionary fervor and would become in the process the basic element for the destruction of the counterrevolutionary forces."[14]

In 1972 a second political-military organization splintered from the PCS. The People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) was established by former PCS members, young dissidents from the Christian Democratic Party, religious activists and students. Like the FPL, the ERP had a strongly militaristic conception of the revolutionary struggle. For the ERP the armed struggle was all that mattered, and the party clung to that belief for nearly a decade.[15] However, within the ERP two tendencies were present from the beginning. One, as suggested above, thought the revolution could be won principally through military means. The other tendency, which was led by poet, essayist and historian

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[14]Quoted in Montgomery, p. 120.

[15]The reason for the split between FPL and ERP dissidents within the PCS dates back to the Cuban Revolution and the question of armed struggle. According to Robert S. Leiken, "During the 1960s there developed in the PCS currents that favored the Cuban and Chinese criticisms of the Soviet line of `peaceful transition to socialism' which had repudiated armed struggle. Sympathizers of the Cubans gravitated to the FPL; of the Chinese to the ERP. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine--each in turn endorsed by Fidel Castro and repudiated by the Chinese--sharpened the divisions in the party as well as among its dissidents" (Robert S. Leiken, "The Salvadoran Left," in Central America: Anatomy of a Conflict, ed. Robert S. Leiken [New York: Pergamon, 1984], p. 115).

Roque Dalton Garcia, believed that political as well as military action was necessary. Dalton's insistence on a "mass line" that entails political and military work led the more hardline faction to accuse him of being an agent of the CIA, to try him in absentia, find him guilty and condemn him to death. On May 10, 1975 Roque Dalton was assassinated, precipitating the final split within the ERP and the formation of the National Resistance (RN).[16]

By 1978 each of the three main political-military organizations headed a mass organization which formed its support base. The FPL-led Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), created in 1975, was the largest, with nine affiliated organizations and a membership of sixty thousand.[17] Its main base was among agricultural workers and peasants demanding wage hikes, reductions in land rents and credits. The BPR frequently led peasant occupations of haciendas and uncultivated land. The FPL considered the peasantry the key element in a worker-

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[16]According to James Dunkerley, "it is something of a political miracle that [the ERP] was able to survive the event. Not only did the opposition take with it a substantial part of the organization to set up [the RN], but the remnants of the ERP found themselves isolated with the left and devoid of links and credibility with the mass movement. As late as 1977 Fidel Castro denounced the ERP as `another arm of the imperialist police' [and] . . . outside of the country it was not uncommon to hear the ERP referred to as in league with the CIA" (Dunkerley, p. 94).

[17]Leiken, p. 116.

peasant alliance for a "protracted people's war," and argued that the mass organizations should provide the recruits for protracted war.[18]

The RN-led United Popular Action Front (FAPU), created in 1974, focused on forming alliances with progressive sectors of the church and political parties, progressive labor unions, and elements of the private sector. This would soon become the official policy of the FMLN/FDR. The ERP-led 28th of February Popular Leagues (LP-28) was founded by ERP sympathizers within the National University in February 1978.[19] LP-28, the third largest mass organization with about ten thousand members, was considered by others on the left as having the least well-developed political program, and was created as a result of "a belated recognition by the ERP that if it did not create its own mass organization it was going to be left in the dust by the FPL and the RN."[20]

The fifth political-military organization, the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC), developed from a different conception of struggle.

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[18]Ibid.

[19]This date was the first anniversary of the massacre that occurred when the National Police cleared the Plaza Libertad of pro-UNO demonstrators protesting the stolen election of 1977.

[20]Montgomery, p. 126.

Founded on January 26, 1976, its conception of struggle was regional, and thus rooted in the history of Central America. Until late 1980 the PRTC remained a regional party. On October 29, 1980 the national units of the party separated, although ties with each other were maintained. In 1979, the PRTC spawned the youngest and the smallest of the mass organizations, the Popular Liberation Movement (MLP).

As the above discussion shows, a prominent characteristic of the Salvadoran left was its sectarianism. However by the end of 1979, in the wake of the FSLN triumph in neighboring Nicaragua, the differences among the various forces of the left receded. This reduction in sectarianism had many manifestations. For example, on January 11, 1980 a press conference was called to announce the unification of the mass organizations into the Revolutionary Coordination of the Masses (CRM). Similarly, on May 22, 1980 the political-military organizations announced the formation of the Unified Revolutionary Direction (DRU), which, with three commanders from each of the organizations, represented a step forward in the development of a unified military apparatus.[21] The creation of the DRU did not signal however an end to

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[21]Enrique A. Baloyra, El Salvador in Transition, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 160-165.

ideological problems among its constituents. Indeed, the decade-old debate over how to prosecute the struggle continued into 1981, with the largest political-military organization, the FPL, insisting on a prolonged people's war while the others favored a strategy of popular insurrection. Moreover, conflict over the DRU's decision to adopt the Leninist principle of democratic centralism caused the RN to withdraw temporarily from the Directorate.[22] Yet, despite these differences the members of the DRU announced the formation of the FMLN on October 10, 1980, creating a unified command for the various political-military organizations.

The movement toward unity that began in early 1980 was furthered by the unfolding political events within El Salvador. The growing and uncontrolled repression in the countryside, the inability of the junta to control the security forces, and the junta's failure to carry out reform, led to a split in the Christian Democratic Party. On March 9, 1980 the most progressive wing of the party, led by Hector Dada and Ruben Zamora, splintered off and almost immediately reconstituted itself as the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC). The assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero later in March added to the momentum toward unity of the center-left political groups. On April 11 of the same year a

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[22]Montgomery, pp.130-133.

coalition of political parties, professionals and technicians, small business organizations, the National University, six unions and union federations, and a student association announced the formation of the Democratic Front (FD). Five days later this alliance joined the CRM in creating the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), thus unifying all the opposition forces from the center-left to left of the political spectrum.

FMLN Strategic Thought

The prehistory of the FMLN has left a legacy of sometimes violent internal struggle as well as an organic link to some very important mass organizations.[23] The latter have provided not only a reserve of guerrilla fighters and sympathizers, but also the bulk of the militias which have played an important part in the FMLN's military strategy and structure.

The strategic thought of the FMLN is characterized by a remarkable ability to learn from its mistakes and an increasing flexibility in redefining its goals in accordance with new realities. The years from 1981 to 1991 can be divided into four strategic periods, each of which represents an adaptation to new realities confronting the revolutionary leadership: the short-

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[23]An excellent discussion of the sometimes violent internal struggles within the FMLN is found in Leiken, pp. 111-130.

lived general offensive; the period of rebel concentrations and the creation of a revolutionary army; the war of resistance; and, the strategic counteroffensive.

Bolstered by the victory of the Sandinistas in neighboring Nicaragua, the FMLN in its 1980 Platform, dedicated itself

> to overthrow the reactionary military dictatorship of the oligarchy and Yankee imperialism, imposed and sustained against the will of the Salvadoran people for fifty years; to destroy its criminal political-military machine; and to establish a democratic revolutionary government founded on the unity of the revolutionary and democratic forces in the People's Army and the Salvadoran people.[24]

With the creation of the FMLN, preparations for the long-awaited general offensive began. At 6:30 p.m. on January 10, 1981, units of the FMLN commandeered radio stations in San Salvador. Salvador Cayetano Carpio, a member of the FMLN General Command, issued the call to battle:

> The hour to initiate the decisive military and insurrectional battles for the taking of power by the people and for the constitution of the democratic revolutionary government has arrived. We call on all the people to rise up as one person, with all the means of combat, under the orders of their immediate leaders on all war fronts and throughout the national territory. . . . The hour of revolution, the

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[24]"Platform of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (April, 1980)," Quoted in Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, El Salvador: The Face of the Revolution, (Boston: South End Press, 1982), p. 254.

hour of liberation is here. The definitive triumph is in the hands of this heroic people. . . . *Revolución* o *Muerte*. *Venceremos*![25]

In the first hours of the offensive the FMLN had the Salvadoran army on the run, however soon the tide turned. The failed attempt at urban insurrection was followed by ferocious repression and the FMLN withdrew from the cities to the countryside. There a long and difficult process of constructing a revolutionary army and a defensible strategic rear guard, or "zones of control," began.[26]

The war, although never ceasing to be a guerrilla insurgency, acquired increasingly conventional characteristics. Starting in 1982, FMLN fighters were grouped into larger and larger concentrations and launched a series of spectacular actions aimed at making the nation increasingly ungovernable. These actions culminate in 1984 with the destruction of the country's largest and most heavily-defended bridge, the Cuscatlan.[27]

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[25]Quoted in Montgomery, p. 138.

[26]For an insightful treatment of the political aspects of this period, see Mario Lungo, El Salvador 1981-1984: La Dimension Política de La Guerra (San Salvador: *UCA Editores*, 1985).

[27]Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag, "Rethinking War," NACLA: Report on the Americas 23 (September 1989): 16-17.

In other smaller, yet more significant actions during the same period, FMLN forces overwhelmed government outposts in the "zones of control." These guerrilla victories eliminated government control in the rebel "zones" and allowed FMLN forces to develop a new relationship with residents of the areas. Moreover, the elimination of fixed government positions in large parts of the country allowed the FMLN to train new fighters and consolidate its political and logistical structures.

Yet despite the rebel victories during this period, the increasingly conventional character of the war between 1981 and 1984 played to the strengths of the Salvadoran military. The Salvadoran Armed Forces, especially the air force, bolstered by escalating U.S. aid, became ever more effective. This advantage became decisive and in order to maintain the tempo of the fighting,

> rebel cadre were pulled from irregular structures such as militia and guerrilla units to fill the ranks of the larger concentrations. The transformation of the FMLN into an encamped, full-time force meant losing important day-to-day contact with the rebels' civilian base of support, and meant a political decline. Yet it was precisely such organizing and daily contact which were needed to replenish the "social reserve" that was becoming exhausted.[28]

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[28]Ibid., p. 18.

In the end, the need to keep up with the dynamic of escalation led to forced recruitment in some areas in order to fill the holes left by the high casualty rate conventional warfare entails. FMLN leaders have since publicly criticized this practice,[29] and when the strategy became unsustainable the FMLN was forced to restructure completely its strategy and forces. The result, after a difficult and prolonged period of debate and trial and error, was the development of a new strategic line--the war of resistance.

Beginning in 1984, the War of Resistance marked a return to guerrilla war: military units were dispersed and returned to a more irregular status, the "fish" were mixed back into the "sea." In place of the emphasis on a permanent revolutionary army, clandestine organizing of collaborators, militia and guerrillas was renewed and strengthened. Some fighters left the armed struggle and returned to the city to work with the reemerging workers' movement. Others formed underground urban commando cells, so that the next time the guerrillas

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[29]Francisco Jovel of the FMLN General Command has argued that, "in 1983 and 1984 we committed errors. Often comrades who had only joined recently, including some who were forcibly recruited, were sent into combat right off the bat. As a consequence we had desertions, unnecessary deaths, people who had a very negative psychological response to combat. We learned that the only powerful guerrilla force is a voluntary one. We have to involve people gradually, and never take a guerrilla fighter away from his people" (quoted in Ibid.).

launched an offensive the regime would be forced to divide its troops between hitting the rebels in the countryside and defending its own strategic rear guard in the cities. The core of the permanent forces that remained became even more specialized. An elite reserve of "special forces" was developed and used only for actions of strategic importance, such as the attack on the headquarters of the Fourth Brigade at El Paraiso in 1988.

The objective was to become a more grass-roots, multidimensional, and political force that could again become self-sustaining. At some future point, such a force could launch an offensive against which the conventional war waged by the Armed Forces would be inadequate. Meanwhile, new military tactics were implemented to disperse and wear down the enemy while the revolution adjusted to the transition: mine warfare, economic sabotage, traffic stoppages, and a constant harassment of the Armed Forces that caused greater government casualties than had the spectacular actions of the previous four years.[30]

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[30]In an early 1983 communique, the ERP sought to explain the rationale behind the FMLN's strategy of economic sabotage. "The Salvadoran dictatorship, its armed forces and imperialism know perfectly well that the economy is the basic pillar of political and military power and that in every way the basic economic areas are military objectives. The dictatorship is always crying about the effects of economic sabotage and what advantages it gives to the revolutionary movement.

Political organizing became the crux of the rebel plan during the 1984-1988 war of resistance. The Armed Forces moved in a similar direction, in line with the "hearts and minds" approach pushed by U.S. advisors as part of the low-intensity conflict strategy.[31]

In the countryside, *poder de doble cara* (literally, "double faced power") emerged as the principal form of revolutionary organizing: the fostering of grass-roots organizations which show a legal "face" to the regime while also showing a clandestine, collaborative "face" to the revolution.[32] *Doble cara* developed as a response to several factors: the increasing ability of the Armed Forces to bring the war to the guerrillas, the

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1. Sabotage has a strong impact on the economy, which reduces the dictatorship's capacity for continuing the war. Therefore, it reduces the offensive potential of the armed forces.
2. It forces the army to disperse widely, deploying many units to guard highways, bridges, transportation routes, communications media, electrical wires and installations, estates, etc. Thus we are also reducing the army's offensive potential in this way.
3. The army's inability to control the situation is demonstrated, and thus the state apparatus of the dictatorship is destabilized.
Sabotaging the economy within the framework of a war is not terrorism. It is a weapon used in any military confrontation" (FBIS-Latin America, 15 March 1983, p. 15).

[31]For a discussion of the development of the "low-intensity conflict" strategy on the part of the Armed Forces and their U.S. advisors see Sara Miles, "The Real War: Low Intensity Conflict in Central America," Report on the Americas 20 (April/May 1986): 16-23.

[32]The analysis which follows is based primarily on Miles and Ostertag, "Rethinking War."

dispersion of guerrilla forces, and an internal FMLN debate on how to relate to its civilian supporters (*masas*, in Salvadoran political jargon).

The local *masas* served, in theory, as the rear guard for the guerrilla army, providing them with food, logistics, and intelligence. In practice, they often became a burden on the fighters, who were obliged to care for and protect hundreds and even thousands of people against army incursions, which grew increasingly destructive as the government forces became more adept at prosecuting the war. These problems confronted the FMLN in all its rear guard areas, but they were particularly severe in the zones where "local popular powers" had been organized. "Local popular powers"--civilian governing bodies formed by some FMLN member organizations during the period of guerrilla concentrations--were intended as an open, formal expression of dual power in the rural areas where the Armed Forces had lost permanent control.[33] But the particular characteristics of this form of organizing

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[33]A comprehensive description of the structure and functioning of local "popular powers" can be found in Jenny Pearce, Promised Land: Peasant Rebellion in Chalatenango El Salvador, (London: Latin American Bureau, 1986). See also Francisco A. Alvarez, "Transition Before the Transition: The Case of El Salvador," Latin American Perspectives 15 (Winter 1988): 78-91.

exacerbated many of the difficulties the revolutionary movement faced.

According to Mercedes del Carmen Letona ("Commander Luisa"), one of the principal architects of the *doble cara* strategy, in an FMLN paper on the topic,

> the FMLN, by openly declaring its relationship with these people, made them illegal, which put them into confrontation with the enemy. . . . But the *masas* were unarmed and only had the options of running or hiding, which in turn made them even more illegal.[34]

Friction developed between rebel combat units and *masas* in some areas, and

> the *masas* became isolated from the rest of the civilian population, who did not want to turn themselves into military targets and who preferred to maintain their subsistence activities without being forced to live on the run.[35]

Furthermore, the FMLN was now dispersing its fighters throughout the country. Instead of massing combatants in a zone of control, where they would have to be supplied by overt collaborators, the FMLN broke its fighters up into small groups to carry out political and military work on a much broader and more clandestine basis. Towns which had formerly seen a regular rebel column pass through a few times a year now had a

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[34]Mercedes del Carmen Letona, ("Commander Luisa") "*El Poder de Doble Cara*," internal FMLN manuscript, Morazan, 1987. Quoted in Miles and Ostertag, "Rethinking War," p. 21.

[35]Ibid.

continuing guerrilla presence. These units, operating in zones controlled by the Armed Forces, could not rely on support structures which functioned only in areas of rebel control.

In some areas, "popular power" structures had never been developed. There, the FMLN experimented with different forms of organization to define a more flexible relationship between the rebels and their civilian supporters. As military pressure and political problems threw the popular power structures into crisis, these experiments gradually formalized into *doble cara*.

By working simultaneously above ground as legal entities and underground as FMLN collaborators, *doble cara* organizations are both more overt and more covert that the "popular powers." *Doble cara* is an ambitious effort to develop more autonomous, self-determining mass organizations which are not dependent on FMLN combatants for political direction or military protection. Unlike the "popular powers," *doble cara* organizations involve many people who are not sympathizers of the FMLN but who nevertheless feel the organizations fight for their interests. Commander Luisa writes:

> Our line is participation, in which the *masas* debate ideas, and conduct, organize and decide on their own actions. This means the real practice of democratic liberties, and we have

> to make an effort to have people understand this.[36]

While *doble cara* was emerging in the countryside, the FMLN moved to create urban militia and "urban commando cells." In 1985 unions began to mobilize again and the mid-1980s saw one of the largest strike waves in Salvadoran history. Moreover, with its reopening the National University, closed since 1980, resumed its role as an anti-government organizing center. FMLN advances came slowly, however, and urban organizing lagged behind the rural insurgency.

Though most of the FMLN's clandestine organizing remained invisible from the outside, by the end of 1986 FMLN commanders believed that the correlation of forces were such that the revolution could be moved to the next stage, the strategic counteroffensive.

An FMLN General Command strategy paper captured by the Armed Forces shows how clearly the guerrilla leadership, as early as 1986, discerned the path ahead:

> 1988 seems to be the best or most appropriate moment for launching the strategic counteroffensive. By that time, the party structure of the FMLN will have developed considerably, the experience accumulated by the mass movement will be great, the accumulation of insurrectional forces will have isolated the regime, and elections will have been shown to be unable to offer any solution to even the most backwards elements.

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[36]Ibid., p. 22.

> The enemy will be encircled by its own internal contradictions and hegemonic disputes, exacerbated by the 1988 elections for mayors and deputies and the search, through the 1989 presidential elections, for a new partner for the North American government. . . .
>
> If the masses spontaneously move to more decided struggles and show a willingness to insurrect we must not hold them back. But we must guard against provoking any artificial or voluntaristic explosions. The situation is entirely favorable and we must bring together all the people, in the most widespread and simultaneous way possible. . . .[37]

In early 1989, the FMLN announced that it had entered the strategic counteroffensive phase in the war. The first actions of the strategic counteroffensive--the enunciation of a peace proposal in January, accompanied by various military actions--are indicative of how the FMLN conceives of this new phase in the civil war. Leaders of the FMLN see the counteroffensive as a process of insurrection which entails "civic rebellion," or popular violence of various kinds which challenges the authority of the Salvadoran state and its ability to govern. This will lead to either the military defeat of the Salvadoran government by the rebels or a state of ungovernability in the nation which will force the government to negotiate with the FMLN.

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[37]"*Fase Preparatoria de la Contraofensiva Estrategica*," identified as a document prepared for the November 1986 meeting of the FMLN General Command. Quoted in Miles and Ostertag, "Rethinking War," p. 22.

On January 23, 1989 the rebels, in a move which repudiated earlier FMLN policy[38], committed themselves to accept the results of the presidential election scheduled for March 19, as long as the elections were postponed to September 15. The six month delay, it was argued, would provide the time necessary for the FMLN and the government to begin a dialogue leading to the demilitarization of the nation. In addition the FMLN requested: the creation of a committee, which would include foreign observers, to oversee the elections; guarantees that the United States would "remain removed from the electoral process, without backing any of the political parties;" that Salvadorans abroad be able to vote; and that the military immediately cease the repression. In return the FMLN pledged to respect the government of Jose Napoleon Duarte until the elections, to observe a five-day truce beginning two days before

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[38]The FMLN has traditionally rejected the electoral process describing it as part of the government's counterinsurgency plan. "The FMLN is not against elections in principle," says Joaquin Villalobos, "it is against elections which are carried out under a state of war and when the country is under the control of the United States. It is the United States which in reality makes decisions about the future of El Salvador. There will be no real elections in El Salvador until national sovereignty is guaranteed and there is a national solution to the war" (Joaquin Villalobos, "Popular Insurrection: Desire or Reality?" Latin American Perspectives 62 [Summer 1989]: 25).

and ending two days after the elections, and to accept the legitimacy of the vote.[39]

While President Duarte rejected the rebel plan, claiming that the guerrillas must lay down their weapons without conditions[40], the rebels have continued to propose plans which seek to end the war through negotiations and power sharing.[41] According to PCS general secretary and FMLN commander Jorge Shafik Handel:

> This is the time to search for a national consensus to give substance to what will be the rules of the game in El Salvador. The FMLN does not believe at all that this is the exclusive task of this organization. The FMLN does not believe that it must impose its ideas on the nation. The FMLN makes contributions in the form of efforts and programs.[42]

These "efforts and programs" have gone hand-in-hand with increased insurrection in the cities and the countryside. Indeed, FMLN strategists posit that the

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[39]See FBIS-Latin America, 25 January 1989, p. 9 for the full text of the rebel plan.

[40]Salvadoran Defense Minister Vides Casanova also weighed in. Citing the inviolability of the Salvadoran Constitution which required elections on March 19, the Defense Minister threatened a military coup should the rebel plan be adopted. See FBIS-Latin America, 14 February 1989, p. 15.

[41]While these proposals and the responses they have engendered are too numerous to discuss in detail here, the FBIS-Latin America reports for the years 1989 and 1990 are excellent sources of the texts of these proposals as well as the Salvadoran government responses.

[42]FBIS-Latin America, 16 November 1989, pp. 18-22.

increased violence will beget peace since it is imperative to correct "the arrogant and boastful attitude of the government and military because of an alleged weakness shown by the FMLN, which obstructs the negotiation process."[43] Similarly, FMLN commander Nidia Diaz has said that while the rebels favor negotiations, "if the government does not want to negotiate, then El Salvador could become another Beirut. No one wants that. No one would benefit from that." Yet if the government does not accept negotiations "the struggle will continue."[44]

The strategic counteroffensive is also characterized by an attempt to form what the Left refers to as the *frente amplio*--a broad, multi-class coalition in favor of a progressive political platform in which the revolutionary Left can set the general direction but not all of the content. This aspect of the counteroffensive has been the slowest to emerge and, according to rebel leaders, the momentum of their actions has to give sufficient urgency to the demand for a negotiated solution before such a coalition could come together.

The initial outlines of a future pluralist alliance began to emerge soon after the enunciation of the

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[43]FBIS-Latin America, 3 May 1990, p. 9.

[44]FBIS-Latin America, 30 November 1989, p. 5.

January peace plan. The Christian Democratic-oriented National Worker-Peasant Union (UNOC) and the leftist National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) formed a coalition to support the proposal. It was quickly endorsed by the Permanent Committee of the National Debate for Peace, a forum of civic organizations called together by Catholic Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas to search for ways to bring the conflict to an end. The National Debate is a broad formation which brings together 59 different organizations ranging from radical unions, to religious, and pro-PDC groups.

With the electoral campaign in full swing no candidate could afford to oppose the idea of peace. Despite the strong opposition of the Armed Forces, all 13 of El Salvador's political parties flew to Mexico for a highly publicized meeting with the rebel leadership. For over a month, the Christian Democrats and the National Republican Alliance (ARENA) kept the proposal alive, as each vied to saddle the other with responsibility for killing it.[45]

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[45]The FMLN appears to have anticipated this, and designed its strategy accordingly. In the words of FMLN representative Ana Guadalupe Martinez, "Obviously we knew ARENA would at first say no, since the polls gave them a virtual certainty of victory. We thought the PDC would speak of unconstitutionality, but would search for a formula that would make them appear to be at least considering it. . . . And this is what happened. ARENA said no, the PDC, without saying no, did not say yes, and this facilitated the electoral game the other parties played, which gave us the space to make another

ARENA's electoral victory on March 19, 1989 was a blow to the FMLN attempt to create a *frente amplio*, and since the FMLN has attempted, through insurrection, to demonstrate that the ARENA project is not viable. Again, this underlines a central hypothesis of FMLN strategy: the two lines of insurrection and negotiated solution are intimately connected. The pursuit of negotiations and a multi-class alliance can only develop to the degree than an insurrectionary victory becomes a realistic possibility, and is perceived as such by other social and political actors. At the same time, should a broad consensus for a negotiated settlement acquire actual political form and be frustrated by the Armed Forces and ARENA, that very frustration will feed the insurrectionary project.

The FMLN and the Demise of Communism

The transformation of FMLN strategic policy which attempts to move the struggle from the battlefield to the political arena has corresponded with the "demise of communism," prompting many to speculate about the significance of the latter for the former. While *perestroika* and the changes it has engendered, especially the increased pressure that has been put on

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procedural proposal to keep the debate alive" (quoted in Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag, "Rethinking Peace," p. 38).

Cuba, have had an impact on the guerrilla's strategic thinking, these may not be the most important in explaining the FMLN's "new thinking." More germane for the FMLN are: the perception of a shifting correlation of forces within El Salvador; the "lessons" of Nicaragua; and the growing public demand for peace and democracy.

In their public pronouncements leaders of the FMLN have stated that *perestroika*, per se, has had little impact on their strategic thinking or on the prosecution of the war. Paralleling the analysis of Fidel Castro, FMLN commandantes have posited that there are numerous ways of implementing socialism, and while *perestroika* may be appropriate for the USSR, it is not for El Salvador. In this vein Joaquin Villalobos has argued that "the pattern of our political strategy is in line with our own model, irrespective of the crises and whatever problems may exist in the socialist camp."[46] Villalobos has also written that, far from being detrimental to the revolutionary left in Central

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[46]FBIS-Latin America, 10 October 1989, p. 29. Similarly, FMLN commander Ana Maria Guadalupe Martinez in an interview published in La Republica (Italy):

"Question: You used to talk about revolution, now you talk about democracy. How much has the crisis of communism influenced your decisions?

"Guadalupe: The Front, as such, has never had direct relations with the USSR. Obviously the new U.S.-USSR relations have helped us to reflect also on the significance of revolution in Latin America" (FBIS-Latin America, 21 November 1989, pp. 18-19).

America, *perestroika* and the changes it has ushered in are positive developments. *Perestroika*, he argues, has furthered an ongoing decline in U.S. militarism and a reduction in the U.S. capacity for aggression.

> Since America's defeat in Vietnam, U.S. strategists have adopted the option of low-intensity warfare, which is an effort to maintain a policy of intervention by other means. They recognize that using U.S. troops in El Salvador is not effective or in line with political realities within the United States. In short, administrations running the Vietnam War had a freer hand than those now running the war in Central America. The reduction in militarism and the shift from policies of direct intervention permit revolutionary movements formerly threatened with siege and attrition, and facing reversals, to receive more space to act in the political arena.[47]

While noting that "it cannot be said that interventions are over and will not be repeated," Villalobos concludes

> the conditions that enabled the United States to intervene in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Grenada in 1983 or to isolate Cuba from Latin America from the early 1960s on no longer exist.[48]

Perestroika has also hastened the development of multipolar geopolitics, making it "impossible to reduce today's world to capitalism versus socialism."[49] It is Villalobos' expectation that these new conditions may lead the U.S. to abandon its anti-communist ideology and

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[47]Joaquin Villalobos, "A Democratic Revolution for El Salvador," Foreign Policy 74 (Spring 1989): 109.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., p. 111.

its tendency "to see one's own society as a universal model and to reject totally other models in a world of great complexity among societies, each with distinct historical determinants, each with its own pattern of development."[50]

These upbeat public assessments of crucial changes in world politics must be taken with a grain of salt. FMLN commanders have been asked by the Soviets to modify their militarism. Moreover, FMLN commanders know that if victorious they are unlikely to get much of a Soviet subsidy.[51] However the FMLN assertion that Soviet *perestroika* will not have a direct effect on the guerrilla forces is correct. What is of greater concern for the FMLN is the impact of Soviet *perestroika* on Cuba. Since 1980 the Soviet Union has been restrained in providing support for the FMLN, and Cuba and Nicaragua have been the primary external sources of support.[52] The economic crunch being felt by Castro's

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[50]Ibid.

[51]James Le Moyne, "El Salvador's Forgotten War," Foreign Affairs 69 (Summer 1989): 105-125.

[52]"[T]he Soviet Union agreed to give practical assistance to the FMLN at a meeting in Havana in December 1979, organized by Castro. However, Moscow did not switch completely to support tactics until the spring and summer of 1980, which then amounted only to the training of a few dozen recruits. Salvadoran Communist Party leader Shafik Handal travelled to the USSR and Eastern Europe in June-July 1980, but was said to be disappointed with the low level of his reception, particularly in the Soviet Union, where he met only

Cuba has bolstered Castro's position that a political settlement of the war is imperative.[53]

Even more important than the counsel of Castro in moving the FMLN to a strategy of negotiations is their perception of a shifting correlation of forces within the nation. According to FMLN theorists, the economic crisis that has devastated El Salvador throughout the 1980s coupled with the repression perpetrated by the Armed Forces has proven the failure of the "pseudo-reformism" of the PCD and ARENA. The severity of the crisis, which has been exacerbated by an expanding

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Mikhail Kudachkin, deputy chief of the Latin American section of the Central Committee's International Affairs department. Handal apparently negotiated deliveries of U.S.-made weapons from Ethiopia and Vietnam, and some East European countries agreed to provide communications equipment, uniforms and medical supplies. The only commitment made by the Soviet Union was to help in arranging the transfer of these supplies to Cuba" (Nicola Miller, Soviet Relations with Latin America 1959-1987, [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989], p. 189).

[53]Miller argues that Cuba, at least since 1984, has been pressing the FMLN to negotiate an end to the civil war. "Cuba . . . because of its own security considerations and because of its identification with the Sandinista regime and the Salvadoran guerrilla movement, is keen to promote a political settlement of the region's crisis as rapidly as possible. Havana is acutely aware that any military `solution' can only involve an escalation of the U.S. role to the point of defeat for the revolutionary forces" (Ibid., p. 120). For a more up-to-date discussion of the USSR, Cuba, and Central America see Howard J. Wiarda, "The Soviet Union, the Caribbean, and Central America: Towards a New Correlation of Forces," in The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World, eds. Edward A. Kolodziej and Roger E. Kanet (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 94-120.

external debt, natural disasters, and corruption, is so great that "Even if there had been no war . . . war would inevitably have broken out, and even if the FMLN had not existed, such a crisis would have spawned armed struggle."[54]

The revolutionary potential engendered by the objective conditions of poverty and repression are furthered by the high level of mass organization throughout El Salvador. Villalobos posits that "The Salvadoran people have a tradition of organization and struggle, [and] an ability to conspire," and during the War of Resistance (1984-1988) trade unions, community organizations, human rights groups, and the like, took advantage of every political space available to them to further their organization. These groups, which are often autonomous and genuinely representative of their constituencies yet sympathetic to the aspirations of the FMLN, have become a major force which highlights the weak mass base of both ARENA and the Christian Democrats.[55]

Therefore, Villalobos argues, by 1989 the concrete reality was such that change would come to El Salvador either through a popular insurrection or a negotiated

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[54]Villalobos, "Popular Insurrection," p. 8.

[55]For further discussion, see Ibid. and William Bollinger, "Villalobos on Popular Insurrection," Latin American Perspectives 62 (Summer 1989): 38-47.

settlement, and while the latter was preferable, the former could not be forsaken until the government had agreed to negotiations and a demilitarization of society. In effect, Villalobos has argued that it is now time for the Salvadoran Right and its allies in the United States to take off their ideological blinders and develop a more realistic assessment of the war, and consider entering into negotiations which would end the conflict.

The strategic thinkers in the FMLN stress that the strategic counteroffensive illustrates the victory of pragmatism and concern with objective realities, over blind dogmatism. "Each revolution must adapt to the realities it faces and build on this basis its own thinking."[56] Certainly the most significant geopolitical reality confronting the FMLN is the hostility of the United States to revolution in Central America, and the strategic counteroffensive must be understood as an attempt to bring revolutionary transformation to El Salvador without engendering years of U.S. hostility and economic sabotage. While the FMLN downplays the significance of low intensity conflict, and claims that its offers to negotiate a settlement that will safeguard vital U.S. interests stem from a deep-seated commitment to democracy, what is clear is

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[56]Villalobos, "Popular Insurrection," p. 106.

that the FMLN does not want Salvadoran "contras" attacking from Honduras, forcing the revolutionary regime to squander scarce resources on military defense. To achieve a military victory only to face an economic catastrophe similar to that faced by the Sandinistas is seen by the FMLN leadership as a Pyrrhic victory. The "lesson" of Nicaragua has been learned and has led the Salvadoran guerrillas to rethink the proper means of revolutionary transformation.

A final objective reality which is at the root of the new policy of the FMLN is the growing popular sentiment behind peace and the growing approval among the majority of Salvadorans for the democratic character of the regime, if not the performance of the government itself. Survey data gathered in late 1989 and published in El Diario De Hoy shows solid support for the Cristiani government, a rejection of violence and the damage inflicted by terrorism, and strong support for a negotiated settlement of the conflict.[57] Polls

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[57]FBIS-Latin America, 13 November 1989, p. 39. A portion of the findings are reported below:

When asked how would you rate the armed forces, 37% of the respondents said excellent; 44% good; 9.3% average; 2.7% bad; 0.3% very bad; 6.7% did not respond.

When asked how would you rate the job done by the government, 21.3% said excellent; 54.3% said good; 15% said average; 2.7% bad; 0.3% very bad; 6.4% did not respond.

When asked how would you describe President Cristiani's performance, 29% said excellent; 51.3% good; 11% average; 1.3% bad; 7.4% did not respond.

conducted by the Jesuit-run Central American University (UCA) confirm these findings. In a series of polls taken in 1988 and 1989, the UCA found that while disillusionment with the current government is widespread, only some 30 percent of the population has adopted explicitly "radicalized" politics.[58]

Spokespeople for the UCA dismiss the FMLN's plans for insurrection as wishful thinking. "People are very conscious of their misery, of their hunger, even of who is exploiting them," asserts UCA Vice-Rector Ignacio Martin-Baro.

> Still this doesn't lead them to think of insurrection. This is not to say that [the FMLN] doesn't have the sympathy of the majority--perhaps they do. But insurrections do not spring up by chance, much less after nine years of civil war.[59]

Equally problematic for rebels desiring popular insurrection is that democratic roots are beginning to take hold in El Salvador. Clearly, Salvadoran elections

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When asked who is responsible for breaking the dialogue toward peace, 63% said the FMLN; 5.7% the Armed Forces; 4.3% the government; 22.7% did not know; 3.9% did not respond.

When asked who is responsible for the massacre of the Jesuit priests, 26% said FMLN; 7% said Armed Forces; 5.3% said the government; 53.3% did not know.

When asked should the dialogue continue, 80% said yes; 14% said no; 5.7% did not know; 0.3% did not respond.

[58]Miles and Ostertag, "Rethinking War," p. 23.

[59]Quoted in Ibid.

throughout the 1980s were part of a counterinsurgency strategy aimed at defeating the FMLN. Elections that were free of fraud were seen as essential to legitimize the government in the eyes of Salvadorans, a necessary first step before aggressive military actions against the guerrillas could be taken, and to ensure the maintenance of military assistance from the United States. It was also assumed that free and fair elections would result in the coming to power of a popular, centrist government that could survive long enough to build a lasting support base that would permit future governments to consolidate the program of middle-class reform. That is, elections would curtail the extreme right while helping secure aid to defeat the guerrillas.[60]

While the latter assumption has not proven correct--the election of ARENA in 1989--the first two have. Democratic roots are beginning to take hold in El Salvador, as evidenced by the successful completion of several rounds of national elections which selected the first civilian governors in over half a century, major improvements in government respect for human rights, and

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[60]Jose Z. Garcia, "Recent Elections in El Salvador," in Elections and Democracy in Central America, eds. John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 60-92.

the tentative emergence of a competitive party system.[61] Hence, the FMLN peace proposal of 1989 and their recent vow not to interfere with the municipal and legislative elections of March 10, 1991 signal a growing recognition of the changing environment in which the FMLN works.[62]

The "demise of communism" and the development of the "post-Cold-War order" have played an important part in altering the environment in which Central American revolutionaries must work. Soviet *perestroika*, the defeat of the Sandinistas in February 1990 elections, and the growth of a consensus behind democratic practices within El Salvador, all signal the need for the FMLN to rethink its more traditional ways of attempting to achieve state power. Indeed, taking state power outright has become unfeasible, and Salvadoran revolutionaries have been forced to seek new routes for realizing popular demands. Negotiations, power-sharing, even competing in elections if their integrity could be guaranteed, all are currently seen as more viable means to pursue social transformation in the developing "new world order."

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[61]Ibid.

[62]Mark A. Uhlig, "Salvador Guerilla Leaders To Stop Subverting Election," New York Times, 2 March 1991, p. 3.

CHAPTER 7

PERESTROIKA AND THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT IN LATIN AMERICA

This concluding chapter will examine the impact of *perestroika* and the changes in the socialist world it has ushered in for the revolutionary Left in Latin America. The chapter begins with a discussion of *perestroika*'s implications for the Left in Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, and ends with reflections on the fate of the Latin American revolutionary Left in the era of "the demise of Communism."

Cuba

If Cuban-style *perestroika* is in the cards, then many speculate that the 1991 Communist Party Congress will set the process in motion. One of the main topics of discussion at the congress, which was originally scheduled for March 1991 but has been postponed until October, is the role of the party in Cuban society under the prevailing circumstances. Yet, if recent comments by high-ranking members of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) are any indication of what one can expect from the congress, then plans for a Cuban-style restructuring will not emerge from the meeting.

According to Ambassador to Nicaragua Fernando Ravelo Renedo, the upcoming PCC congress "will not

encourage changes that transgress socialist principles," and instead will be charged with "perfecting socialist democracy."[1] While admitting that the congress will seek to renovate the party, Ravelo categorically rules out the possibility that the congress will introduce political pluralism and scoffs at the notion that renovation may require replacing the party's top leadership, including Fidel.

> The people think of Fidel as their guide in the renewal, and it has not cross [sic] their minds that he could be removed from the revolution's leadership. Were he to leave, the people would feel as if they had been orphaned.[2]

Ramon Suarez Vega, a PCC Department of Ideology official concurs with Ravelo's analysis of the upcoming congress. While positing that the party's "renovation" will require that more young people (between the ages of 28 and 40) be integrated into important leadership positions, he argues that

> Cuba will not renounce any of its fundamental socialist principles. The PCC is a Marxist-Leninist party and is not going to renounce any of those principles.[3]

These assertions give greater credence to the position of Juan M. del Aguila who, in 1990, wrote that:

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[1]"Envoy to Nicaragua Views Upcoming Party Congress," Barricada, 7 February 1991, p. 6.

[2]Ibid.

[3]"Ideology Official on Congress, Other Issues," FBIS-Latin America, 15 March 1991, p. 1.

> As was the case when medieval monks preserved Catholicism against pagan doctrines, Cuba's ideologues seek to invigorate Marxism-Leninism against foreign and domestic heretics. A theory whose failures are evident not only in the communist world but also in underdeveloped societies . . . is revived in Cuba at a time when regional if not global trends threaten to dismiss it altogether as an organizing principle. The country could well become the communist world's monastery in the late twentieth century, an isolated shrine in a world besieged by ideological confusion.[4]

As was illustrated in Chapter 4, President Castro's harsh anti-*perestroika* views have the religious character of the "true believer's" defense of orthodoxy against various heresies. Ostensibly, Castro is defending genuine socialism in a world where erstwhile allies have "sold out" to capitalism and "bourgeois democracy." Moreover, the rhetorical defense of socialism is coupled with Rectification policies which harken back to the early years of the revolution and which are contrary to the economic liberalization seen throughout the rest of the socialist world. While Castro perceives his response to the changes taking place around him as a sign of socialist Cuba's strength in an increasingly hostile world, a more correct

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[4]Juan M. del Aguila, "Cuba: Guarding the Revolution," in Glasnost, Perestroika and the Socialist Community, eds. Charles Bukowski and J. Richard Walsh (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 70.

interpretation is that Castro's response is a sign of the weakness of the revolution.[5]

A thorough Cuban-style *perestroika* is unlikely. Such a restructuring would profoundly destabilize the nation and threaten the PCC leadership. Bringing Cuba into the mainstream of world politics would require Castro to allow other political actors to function free of his control. This in turn, would engender the rise of potential rivals to his leadership. Such potential challenges to Castro's complete authority have never been allowed by the maximum leader; Castro has never allowed anyone to gain the personal base and acquire the kinds of skills necessary to be a credible successor. Moreover, to embrace *perestroika* would be to renounce the two defining principles of the Cuban revolution: socialism and hostility to the U.S.. To implement Cuban-style restructuring would, in effect, be an admission that Castro had made serious mistakes in charting his revolution on a socialist and anti-U.S. course. Such an admission would undermine the legitimacy of the revolution and deny that Cuba's transformation signals the "wave of the future" for the Third World.

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[5]Howard J. Wiarda, "Is Cuba Next? Crises of the Castro Regime," Problems of Communism 40 (January-April 1991): 84-93.

If Cuban *perestroika* is not in the cards, one must ask whether President Castro can realistically maintain his nation's position as "the communist world's monastery." The answer is no; change in Cuba is inevitable. Castro's government probably will not fall in the near future. Castro still has control of a potent and loyal security apparatus, his survival strategy of increasing "democracy" among the revolution's supporters, and Castro's still considerable moral legitimacy all point to the fact that those who envision a quick demise of the PCC are mistaken.

However, storm clouds loom on the horizon for revolutionary Cuba. A number of interrelated problems can be identified which will make it more and more difficult for the Cuban leadership to maintain the status quo. First, support for Fidel is to a large extent generational. As those older Cubans who remember life under Batista, the revolutionary struggle or the early years of the revolution and are especially supportive of President Castro die off there will be a parallel decline in the intensity of popular support for the revolution and its maximum leader. This is not to say that Cubans in their 40s and younger are opposed to Fidel, rather these Cubans lack the same strong ties to the maximum leader found among the older generation. Most of the younger generations of Cubans are patriotic

and quite likely would fight to defend the revolution. However these groups of citizens, in part because of their interest in the West and Western styles--including increased freedom and democracy--are more likely to see Castro as an anachronism and obstacle to Cuba's economic health and political development.

Second, as the Cuban economy continues to decline and material hardship grows, discontent with the status quo is bound to grow. While President Castro recently implored Cubans to be proud of their position as "the sole standard-bearer of socialism" in a world where "former allies have capitulated" to the forces of imperialism[6], the government has also announced that it is suspending all investment "of a social nature," save those related to the completion of some works and for agriculture.[7] Cuba's limited resources are now being employed to produce adequate food supplies for the population, to develop tourism and to further the production of medicinal goods. The decision to terminate investment "of a social nature" will have important implications for the Cuban leadership. Not only will it make material hardships worse for the

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[6]"Castro Addresses Federation of University Students Congress Closing," Havana Cubavision Network 22 December 1990. In FBIS-Latin America, 28 December 1990, pp. 3-18.

[7]"Betting on Tourism as Exchange Earner," Latin American Weekly Report, 13 June 1991, p. 8.

majority of Cubans, but it will have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the PCC's claim that the revolution has benefitted the majority.

Third, recent visitors to the island posit that the PCC is increasingly elitist and out of touch with the populace.[8] The upper echelons of the Cuban leadership are most concerned with holding on to their power and to the considerable privileges it brings. Moreover, within the PCC old-guard communists (who are in their 60s and 70s) monopolize most of the important positions, freezing out the younger generation of leaders. This younger cadre of leaders, mostly in their 40s, are bureaucrats and technicians, not ideologues and are growing more and more impatient with the old leadership and their inefficiencies. This younger cadre is also growing increasingly eager to enjoy the privileges that important leadership positions bring. Wiarda reports that Castro is seen by his subordinates as increasingly out of touch, and while he is still honored and deferred to, he is also ignored more and more often.[9]

Castro's rejection of *perestroika* and his unwillingness to bring Cuba into the mainstream of world politics at a time when democracy is on the march and communist regimes are falling has important implications

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[8]Wiarda, pp. 86-87.

[9]Ibid.

for the Central American Left. The growing isolation of Castro's Cuba and Castro's steadfast refusal to adapt the revolution to changing circumstances has reduced Castro's appeal to the Latin American Left. The case studies of Nicaragua and El Salvador have shown that the Cuban model of revolution has been eschewed by both the FSLN and FMLN, and, as will be detailed below, both revolutionary groups have rejected Castro's intransigence and have rethought what it means to be "revolutionary" in Latin America in the late twentieth century.

Nicaragua

The FSLN out of power is a political party in crisis. In the 18 months since their electoral defeat, the Sandinistas have been regrouping and have begun a search for a new identity. Among Sandinista loyalists there is a widespread feeling that change is necessary. However, no consensus exists as to what these changes should be. Many internal debates should be aired at the FSLN's first Party Conference to be held July 19-21, 1991. Leading up to the conference, the FSLN has held numerous regional and local meetings and has encouraged public debate as to the future of the party.

One issue that was raised early in the process of debate before the July conference was the low level of

internal democracy within the FSLN. An article in Barricada complains that

> the FSLN functions like a fiefdom, wherein negotiations are made on behalf of the "grassroots." From the fiefs emerges a class that refuses to be replaced. We see the same faces in different posts. Before they were in the government; today they are in the party. The FSLN seems to be divided . . . into those with "connections" and rights and those without connections and rights. . . . The FSLN cannot function as a political party or be a political option as long as that situation prevails. . . . New faces are needed for the new era as well as persons without any disgraces that could elicit criticism.[10]

These concerns have engendered a FSLN restructuring of its internal workings aimed at democratizing the party. For the first time Sandinista district leaders are being elected by the rank and file instead of being named by party higher-ups. Working commissions have drawn up documents on Sandinista philosophy and bylaws which have been debated in urban barrios and rural communities throughout Nicaragua. An ethics committee charged with investigating allegations of corruption has been established. Finally, the delegates to the party congress, who will be elected directly by FSLN members, will have the opportunity to elect top party leaders, including the party's National Directorate.[11]

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[10]Augusto Zamora, "The Sandinist Relief," Barricada, 8 February 1991, p. 3.

[11]The test of the FSLN's sincerity in proposing a democratization of the party will be whether the "old-guard" leaders allow themselves to be voted out of power

Since their electoral defeat in February 1990, internal FSLN debates have occurred between two party factions: the "pragmatists" (also sometimes identified as Social Democrats) and the "orthodox" (or Marxist-Leninists). The debates between the two factions are not exactly new. The issues of contention--the utility of broad class alliances, and what constitutes proper revolutionary strategy--echo the debates among the three revolutionary tendencies prior to their unification.

Current battlelines are drawn over how closely to collaborate with the UNO coalition of Violeta Chamorro as it attempts to bring stability and economic recovery to the nation. Implicit in this discussion is the basic question: should the FSLN see itself as the vanguard of a popular, working class movement, or should it strive to build a multi-class, nationalist party capable of winning the 1996 election. Pragmatists have advocated working with moderates in the UNO coalition, arguing that the Nicaraguan people are sick and tired of conflict and that stability will give the FSLN room to maneuver in order to protect what is left of the revolution. Rafael Solis, the former secretary of the legislative assembly, has even suggested that the

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and replaced with those they consider inexperienced. See "`Sandinists Militants' Group Issues Proclamation," Barricada, 18 June 1990, p. 5. See also Julie Light, "Nicaragua: Speaking Bitterness," NACLA Report on the Americas 24 (May 1991): 4-7.

Sandinistas "co-govern" with more moderate elements of the UNO alliance and enter the 1996 elections in alliance with UNO moderates. Co-governing would not entail sharing cabinet posts, Solis maintained, but would be a process of finding common ground.

> The Sandinista leadership has to put it to workers bluntly: If the government falls, we are not the ones who will take power, but rather Vice President [Virgilio] Godoy and the UNO extremists. And that would lead to another civil war.[12]

Similarly, former Sandinista cabinet minister Alejandro Martinez Cuenca argues that the FSLN should strive to unite different nationalist currents in favor of development with social justice. Sandinismo should defend the rights of the poor, but from a "multi-class, pluralistic perspective."[13] Former Sandinista ambassador to the Organization of American States Carlos Tunnerman agrees. The FSLN should promote a social pact that would be "the heart of a new national, multi-class project."[14]

The orthodox see such a strategy as an unwise accommodation to U.S. interests and the Nicaraguan business class, the very interests which championed the

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[12]Quoted in Light, p. 5. See also Xavier Reyes Alba, "Sandinist Ramirez: Possible Alliance Unsuitable," Barricada 22 January 1991, p. 6.

[13]Quoted in Carlos M. Vilas, "What Are They Saying," NACLA Report on the Americas 24 (May 1991): 6.

[14]Ibid.

FSLN's demise. They argue that the only way to safeguard the people's interests is to work from below, even if this puts the FSLN on a collision course with UNO moderates. What is needed, argues sociologist Orlando Nuñez Soto, is "a revolutionary alliance of urban workers and campesinos."[15] According to Sandinista Jurist Augusto Zamora: "Instead of suicide accords with the oligarchy, we need a national popular and anti-imperialist revolutionary front . . . to win back power."[16]

Another point of debate between the two factions concerns proper revolutionary strategy. More specifically, should the FSLN maintain its traditional anti-imperialist stance which pits the party against the U.S. and with the socialist world, or should this be updated and altered given changed circumstances.

FSLN Commander Victor Tirado, who is a member of the FSLN National Directorate, has been an eloquent spokesman for the pragmatist position. In an article published shortly after the FSLN's electoral defeat he argued that, with the fall of the socialist bloc and the decline of Soviet support for the Third World, the era of anti-imperialist revolutions has come to an end.

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[15]Quoted in Villas, p. 6.

[16]Ibid.

Moreover, anti-imperialist movements end up in economic disaster.

> If we understand anti-imperialist struggles to mean a total military and economic confrontation with imperialism, then the cycle of these kinds of revolutions is ending. We have to look for new options. . . . The worldwide trend can be summed up in two phrases: market economy and free elections.[17]

Finally, should the FSLN continue to define its mission as "a perpetual struggle against U.S. imperialism, then, of course, we [are] going to be struggling eternally."[18]

Orthodox Sandinistas, including the only surviving founder of the FSLN, Tomas Borge, have argued that despite global changes the FSLN must remain anti-imperialist. According to Borge,

> Statements that imperialism doesn't exist or that it doesn't merit a confrontation, a political or ideological war, are . . . historically false.[19]

FSLN National Directorate member Luis Carrion concurs:

> Anti-imperialism is the flip side of our defense of Nicaraguan sovereignty, and of our commitment to the peoples of the Third World.[20]

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[17]Sergio Ferrari, "Tirado Outlines Post-Election Plans," Barricada, 20 March 1990, p. 3.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Quoted in Vilas, p. 6.

[20]Ibid.

Since last year, the pragmatists within the FSLN have gained a clear edge. The pragmatist position is stronger among the upper reaches of the party than at the base, hence orthodox Sandinistas emphasize democratization and renovation within the party while refusing to revise their positions on class alliances and the anti-imperialist nature of the party.[21] Evidence of the pragmatists' advantage is found in the FSLN's response to the labor protests of the summer 1990. Violent clashes between Sandinista trade unionists and strike breakers in July 1990 threatened to plunge the country into civil strife. Fears of a power play by the Right brought Sandinista leaders and UNO moderates together to resolve the conflict before it escalated out of control. According to National Workers Front leader Damaso Vargas, during the July strikes "there were actions in Managua that the [FSLN] departmental commission opposed, and, I should point out, even tried to dismantle."[22] The strikes were also a litmus test of the army's working relationship with the government. Defense Minister General Humberto Ortega ordered troops to dismantle barricades, but vowed the Sandinista army would never turn its guns on

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[21]See footnote number 10. Augusto Zamora is a member of the orthodox faction.

[22]Quoted in Vilas, p. 7.

protesters. Ortega has since pledged to depoliticize the armed forces and has complied with instructions to slash the size of the army by more than half. The pragmatist position is also dominant in the FSLN's Principles and Program which will be debated at the July party conference. According to Jaime Wheelock, member of the FSLN's National Directorate and head of the commission charged with drawing up the draft of the FSLN's Principles and Program, the document stresses that the FSLN is committed to the development

> of a Nicaragua where all of its citizens, from the peasants to the business owners, have equal rights and both may play a part in the sacrifices for the benefits of the nation's wealth.[23]

The document does not define the Front as a revolutionary and anti-imperialist party, nor does it describe the FSLN's goal as the creation of socialism.

> We are for a non-capitalist alternative; we're even supportive of the socialist development of society, but in a suitable, politic and realistic way . . . [and] according to international rhythms and conditions.[24]

El Salvador

The FMLN's two-track policy of negotiating while keeping military pressure on the ARENA government

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[23]Jaime Wheelock, "Socialism is an Ideal Not a Dogma," Barricada International, June 1991, p. 24.

[24]Ibid.

continues. As described in Chapter 6, FMLN strategists view continued military actions primarily as a means of impressing upon the Salvadoran government and its U.S. supporters that the war is unwinnable, that the FMLN is a political force that cannot be ignored, and therefore, that serious negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict are imperative.[25] Reports from government ministers and guerrilla commanders alike indicate that these negotiations, aided by a United Nations mediator, are making progress toward a military truce and eventual national reconciliation.

A major impediment to progress in the negotiations has been the issue of the Salvadoran military. The FMLN has demanded that the military demobilize before a ceasefire. The guerrillas have also called for the subordination of the military to civilian powers and for the establishment of a commission to investigate abuses allegedly perpetrated by the military and paramilitary groups. The ARENA government, on the other hand, has

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[25]See "FMLN Vows to Continue Downing Planes," San Salvador Radio Cadena, in FBIS-Latin America, 7 December 1990, pp. 10-11.

The FMLN's decision in early February 1991 to return 17 of the 28 surface-to-air missiles acquired from the Sandinista army was described by the clandestine Radio Farabundo Marti as a "political victory" for the guerrillas. "Politically speaking, the return of the missiles has been the most overwhelming expression of the dual power which exists in El Salvador, given the FMLN's existence, its territorial control, and its army" ("Rebels View Missile Return," FBIS-Latin America, 5 February 1991, p. 9).

been unwilling to demobilize the Army until a ceasefire is reached, arguing that if the FMLN is genuine in its calls for peace then it should simply lay down its arms first.

Important progress on this issue came at the UN-mediated Mexico City negotiations between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government held April 4-27, 1991. The "Mexico Declaration" issued at the conclusion of the negotiations called for constitutional amendments which would: subordinate the armed forces to civilian power; create a "truth commission" charged with investigating alleged abuses perpetrated by the military and paramilitary groups; and, create a Civilian National Police to replace the public security corps, which will operate under civilian control independent from the Army in urban and rural areas.[26] Early on the morning of April 30, 1991 the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly approved the reforms and soon thereafter the FMLN announced that it has set up a political committee to prepare for their incorporation to legal political

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[26]A full text of the "Mexico Declaration" is found in FBIS-Latin America, 29 April 1991, pp. 7-10. For the ARENA response to the declaration see "Arena President `Optimistic'," FBIS-Latin America, 29 April 1991, p. 10. For the FMLN response see "Rebel Commanders View Talks," Notimex (Mexico City), in FBIS-Latin America, 29 April 1991, p. 10-11.

activity.[27] At a press conference on the northern outskirts of San Salvador, FMLN commander Gerson Martinez asserted that

> the future of this country will be *civilista*--must be *civilista*. All social forces and political society must fight to build a country where the authority of the civilian society prevails over any military authority.[28]

The Demise of the Socialist Paradigm and the Revolutionary Left

This work has examined how revolutionary movements have adjusted, or failed to adjust, to the enormous changes in the socialist world--changes set in motion by Soviet *perestroika* and foreign policy new thinking. As detailed in Chapter 3, *perestroika* and foreign policy new thinking have engendered a Soviet "strategic withdrawal" from the Third World. This new posture toward Third World nations and revolutionary movements corresponds with new Soviet understandings about the revolutionary potential of the Third World, and is motivated by the related desires to reduce the costs of defending the USSR's vital interests, devote more of the nation's scarce resources to the domestic economy, and

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[27]"Details on Approval of Constitutional Changes," FBIS-Latin America, 1 May 1991, p. 11. See also "Getting Ready for the Ceasefire," Latin American Weekly Report, 11 July 1991, pp. 2-3.

[28]Quoted in "Getting Ready for the Ceasefire," p. 2.

improve relations with the West, especially the United States. As the Soviet Union has distanced itself from erstwhile allies in the Third World, and as the USSR has allowed the nations of Eastern Europe to chart their own political and economic course, the revolutionary Left in Latin America has lost a number of important potential allies and sources of assistance.

Perestroika and the transformations in the socialist world has also made the Cuban model of revolutionary change irrelevant. The Cuban model is increasingly seen by the Left as not viable. This is a crucial development for the revolutionary Left. The Cuban experiment, along with the Soviet, made up the socialist paradigm in Latin America; by the early 1960s each new revolutionary movement added, subtracted or altered aspects of the Cuban and Soviet models in order to fit their own particular circumstances. With the demise of the socialist paradigm the Left's point of reference for conceiving of an alternative to Latin America's current state of affairs is no more. Under these new circumstances, it is impossible for the Left to think outside of the parameters of the current reality in Latin America.

In a Latin America in which socialism, especially in its anti-democratic, Stalinist form, is in severe crisis and in which the market economy and electoral

democracy are seen as the waves of the future, the idea of revolution has faded. This is not because the crises that were thought to be the foundation for both its inevitability and desirability have changed; if anything they are more and more present.[29] Rather, the idea of revolution has faded because the outcome of revolution has become unattractive or unimaginable and because, after the 1990 elections in Nicaragua, it has become reversible. The defeat of the FSLN was a rejection of the revolution by the people themselves, albeit one delivered under duress.

Under these new conditions only those like Castro--who knows that Cuban-style *perestroika* would lead to his fall from power and probably the rolling back of most of the revolution--and the Peruvian Sendero Luminoso--who are isolated from the rest of the hemisphere--can adhere to traditional revolutionary formulas. Hence, one sees the Nicaraguan FSLN rethinking its revolutionary strategy and project and working to build electoral democracy.

It is likely that any future Sandinista government will look much like the People's National Party (PNP)

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[29]Cuban President Castro often declares that while the crisis in socialism gets full media attention, what goes unnoticed is that capitalism in Latin America is in crisis too. He has a point. Many nations in the region struggle under increasing debt burdens and declining economies and have seen their standard of living fall to the level of the 1960s.

government of Michael Manley in Jamaica. Manley first governed Jamaica between 1972-1980, when he championed the replacement of capitalism with "democratic socialism," lectured his citizens on the dangers of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of the larger world system of imperialism, challenged U.S. foreign policy, and formed close ties with Cuba's Castro. The nation suffered severe economic problems and grew increasingly isolated internationally during Manley's tenure and in 1980 he was defeated in elections which brought the conservative Edward Seaga to power as Prime Minister. Manley's second opportunity to govern Jamaica came in 1989 when his PNP defeated the Jamaican Labor Party (JLP) of Seaga. Since 1989, Manley has been candid about the "mistakes" he made in the 1970s and his government has dropped its harsh anti-imperialist rhetoric, distanced itself from Castro, developed a better relationship with the United States, and entered into a working relationship with the IMF. Explaining his government's new posture Manley concedes that "The world has changed. Jamaica has changed. And I think I have changed."[30]

These new conditions have also led the Salvadoran guerrillas to rethink the taking of power through

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[30]Quoted in Saul Landau, "Lonely Manley," Mother Jones, March/April 1991, p. 26.

violent revolution. This traditional revolutionary path to power is rejected in favor of a more peaceful strategy which may allow FMLN leaders to share power with those forces against whom they have battled since the early 1980s.

The last years of the twentieth century are clearly a time of renovation for significant segments of the revolutionary Left in Latin America. Old notions of what it means to be a revolutionary are being rethought. This does not signal any so-called end of history, rather it means only that certain historically important ideas are fading away. In fact, the current situation for the revolutionary Left in Latin America could be the best thing that has ever happened to it. The demise of largely anti-democratic paradigm may provide the Left with the opportunity to democratize itself. Such a transformation could allow Left movements to create strategies and programs that link their struggles more closely with the burgeoning desire for freedom and democracy sweeping the hemisphere.

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